APRIL 1951

COMMENTARY

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The Liberals Who Haven't Learned — GRANVILLE HICKS

Park Forest: Birth of a Jewish Community — HERBERT J. GANS

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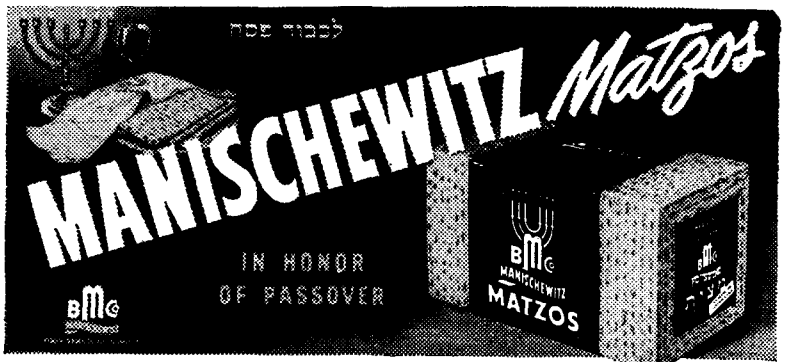

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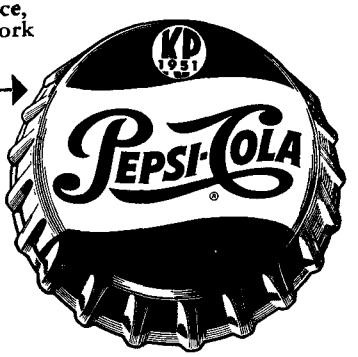

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NEEDED: A PACIFIC PACT

Guarding Against the Pitfalls of "Localized War"

G. F. HUDSON

THE war in Korea is certainly one of the oddest wars in history. Four out of five of the recognized Great Powers of the world are engaged in it on one side or the other, yet military operations have so far been confined to the territory of Korea. No war of such a scale and significance has ever before been thus localized. It is not that two states are being left to fight out their quarrel while the rest of the world remains neutral. On the contrary, the whole world is involved in the struggle, whether as belligerents or non-belligerents; there are really no neutrals in this affair—not even India, which committed itself to the Security Council's original condemnation of North Korean aggression. Despite all doubts, hesitations, and confusions of mind, world opinion recognizes that Korea is the test case. Here, in this mountainous peninsula of Asia, the destiny of all mankind is at stake; here the capacity of the free world to resist its totalitarian enemy is being subjected to an inexorable challenge. Nevertheless, this vast combat of mighty forces is still contained within the boundaries of Korea.

The Korean war is localized because there has so far been a tacit agreement on both sides to keep it so. The Soviet policy of making piecemeal conquests for Communism by proxy runs parallel to the Western democracies' aim of containing Communism while avoiding a general war. This situation renders possible local armed clashes which are real trials of strength between the two world power blocs, but do not involve their full strength. Such outbreaks may even be regarded as safety valves for pressures which must otherwise erupt in world war.

It is obvious, however, that localized war always involves a danger of general war in circumstances of worldwide tension; it is like lighting a fire in the middle of a dump of explosives. Further, the side which is the more unwilling to risk an extension of hostilities is at a disadvantage. It is extremely important, therefore, that all those who have

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RECENT pronouncements by General MacArthur and others have emphasized again the paradoxical character of the Korean war, a war in which all the world's great powers have become in some way involved and which nevertheless remains confined within the borders of Korea. Both the Western nations and the Soviet Union, for their own different reasons, have wished to keep this a "localized war." But, as G. F. HUDSON suggests, this policy has serious drawbacks for the West, and may indeed, if we do not understand its dangers, tie the hands of the United Nations while leaving Soviet aggression free. Mr. Hudson is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, and is a regular contributor to the London *Economist*. He has studied in Japan, served for seven years with the British Foreign Office (1939 to 1946), and is the author of three books on the Far East.

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the responsibility for making or criticizing policy in America, Britain, or elsewhere in the democratic world should understand the implications of localized war and study the lessons the Korean experience can teach.

THE aggressor in war always has the advantage of being able to choose the time and place of initial attack. If in addition the aggressor is sure of being able to localize a war and remain immune from retaliation, he can plan a whole series of local aggressions, each one in the series facilitating the next not only by the capture of new resources or strategic positions, but also by the accumulation of prestige and the corresponding intimidation and demoralization of opponents. This acceleration of moral effect is particularly important in relation to Communism because of the great concentration of Communist propaganda on building up a myth of invincibility.

Communists everywhere preach not only the historically determined certainty of their ultimate victory, but also the intrinsic superiority of their armed forces over those of the "decaying" capitalist and social-democratic world. A great part of the immense Soviet propaganda output since 1945 has been devoted to asserting that Russia alone achieved the victory over both Germany and Japan. America and Britain have been depicted as warmongering imperialists, but at the same time as impotent to check the advance of Communist power, and in any case as too cowardly and corrupt to help those who trust in their support. The betrayal of Poland by the Western Allies at Yalta was used by the Communists all over Eastern Europe to warn their opponents of the fate in store for those who looked to the West for protection, and when the crisis came in Czechoslovakia, the decisive factor in the capitulation of the non-Communist parties was the conviction that, if civil war began, the Red Army would march in, but America and Britain would do nothing. The tide of fear would thereafter have overwhelmed West Germany as well, but for the failure of the Russian blockade of Berlin and the evidence that the Western powers had at last made up their minds to stand firm.

The Berlin fiasco, combined with the defection of Tito and the collapse of the Communist revolt in Greece, brought about a serious deflation of Communist prestige in Europe. Meanwhile, however, events were opening up a new vista of opportunity in Asia. During 1949 the Chinese Communists achieved decisive victory in their civil war and set up their "Central People's Government" in Peking. This upheaval made a profound political impression throughout Asia, and not least in American-occupied Japan. Although the American government had never had any intention of intervening in the Chinese civil war, and had in fact kept Chiang Kai-shek from attacking the Communists in North China during the crucial period after Japan's surrender in 1945, enough American help had been given to the Kuomintang regime to make it possible for the Chinese Communist victory to be represented as a triumph over American "imperialism." In order to demonstrate conclusively the impotence of the West and the irresistible power of the new revolution in Asia, it only remained to eliminate by force the state which had been established under American protection in Korea and formally constituted by act of the United Nations.

IN GIVING their moral and material support to the North Korean aggression last June, Russia and Communist China certainly had in view above all the political repercussions to be expected in Japan, India, and Southeast Asia. They probably did not expect that there would be any actual military intervention either by America alone or by the United Nations, but the arrogant North Korean defiance of the United Nations, when the latter took action, indicates that the planners of the campaign had reckoned with the possibility of intervention, but had calculated that it would not be possible for America and associated states to muster sufficient force in time. From their point of view, an unsuccessful United Nations intervention was far more desirable than a mere unimpeded vic-

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tory over South Korea. For the United Nations to have done nothing last June while South Korea was crushed would indeed have been a disaster, but infinitely more catastrophic would have been the result if the United Nations and the principal Western powers, after committing military forces, had suffered and acknowledged defeat.

This is what very nearly happened. Twice the United Nations army in Korea has been in a serious military position—the first time early in September, when the North Koreans were pressing down the roads to Pusan, and the second time in December, after the Chinese intervention so dramatically turned the scales of battle. The second reverse was much the more serious of the two because the crisis was political as well as military. The fact that China had replaced North Korea as the enemy in the field produced dissension between America and Britain and a period of defeatism and confusion at Lake Success. That the Korean war did not end in January in an armistice followed by a peace of "negotiation," dictated in effect by a victorious China, was due in the first place to the excessive truculence of the Chinese Communists, who failed to take advantage of the mood of appeasement in the United Nations, and secondly to the fine fighting rally of the United Nations forces in Korea, which stiffened the drooping backbones of certain democratic statesmen.

At the beginning of the year the only alternatives appeared to be either to make peace on China's terms or else to use sea and air power for direct retaliation against China. What had happened was that each successive intervention in Korea had reversed the balance of military forces there. If there had been no intervention from either side, the North Koreans would have won the war, not because they were superior in morale or fighting quality, but because Russia had supplied to North Korea the heavy offensive equipment which America had refused to provide for South Korea. The United Nations intervention saved South Korea, though not immediately, and after the Inchon landing the North Korean army was decisively beaten. But the entry of the Chinese confronted the United Nations land forces with superior numbers operating from the "privileged sanctuary" of Manchuria. The United Nations retained command of the sea and of the air, but this appeared insufficient to compensate for the inferiority of the land forces unless it were to be used for blockade and bombing of Chinese territory.

If it were granted that the United Nations army could not win a war confined to Korea, the only hope of forcing the Chinese to withdraw lay in direct action against China, particularly against the highly vulnerable concentration of Chinese heavy industry in southern Manchuria. But such retaliation involved two grave risks: one, that Russia would intervene to protect China, and the other, that Russia would take advantage of an increased involvement of the Western powers in the Far East to strike somewhere in the Middle East or Europe. No agreement to take such risks could be reached between America, Britain, and France, and in January there was a widespread belief that Korea would have to be written off as a lost cause. China had been prepared to take the risk of total war, by intervening in Korea, but the Western powers were not.

Fortunately the United Nations was delivered from the humiliation of suing for terms in Korea by the refusal of the soldiers in the field to be defeated and by the new quality of leadership brought to the conduct of operations by General Ridgway. The protraction of hostilities has revealed serious weaknesses in the mushroom military power of Communist China. At the time of writing the issue remains undecided, and dramatic changes in the fortune of war are still possible, but it is now no longer assumed that the United Nations cannot gain victory over Communist China in a war localized in Korea. If victory can be won, it would have worldwide consequences as beneficial as those of defeat would be disastrous. It would deflate the arrogant self-confidence and internal prestige of the Communist rulers of China, and it would puncture the myth of

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Communist invincibility. It would demonstrate the strength and unity of the free world and the effectiveness of the United Nations as a system of collective security. It would render fresh acts of armed aggression, whether by China or Russia, less likely to be attempted, and less likely to succeed if they were attempted. At best, it might be a decisive factor in averting a third world war; at worst, if a general war cannot be averted, it would make a great difference to the democracies' prospects of winning it.

THE most dangerous element of weakness in the present situation continues, however, to be the divergence between American and British policies with regard to the Far East, and particularly with regard to China. The cleavage became critical for Anglo-American relations two months ago, and although the tension has relaxed since Britain agreed to support the United Nations resolution declaring Communist China an aggressor, it would be unreal to assert that dissension has been overcome. It is indeed difficult to overcome, for it arises not from superficial conflicts of interest or opinion, but from a basic difference of attitude.

Fundamentally it is a matter of geography. The United States spans the North American continent between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and although the bulk of America's population still lives east of the Mississippi, the relative importance of the Pacific Coast, both economic and demographic, has greatly increased during the present century. The Soviet Union likewise has a Pacific coastline, which in spite of its adverse climate has undergone a remarkable economic development over the last twenty years. But Britain is an island of the Atlantic off the western coast of Europe; the Pacific cannot mean to the British people what it means to Americans or Russians.

It is true that in the heyday of British commercial and imperial expansion, Britain not only acquired sovereignty over the Indian subcontinent, but also became the principal trading nation on the coasts of China. But in the last resort the affairs of Europe (and of the Middle East) always had priority for British policy, and as British power in the Far East could only be reinforced at the expense of European and Middle Eastern commitments, it followed that whenever danger threatened in Europe, the British aim was to keep out of trouble in the Far East at almost any price. Between 1902 and 1921 Britain relied on the Anglo-Japanese alliance for the general security of her Far Eastern interests, but the necessities of the First World War precluded opposition to the Japanese policy towards China, which the British government strongly disapproved of. After 1935, when Hitler was raising a new menace of German aggression in Europe, Japan was no longer an ally, but an unfriendly power engaged in violent expansion on the Asian mainland; Britain, however, persistently avoided a clash at a great sacrifice of interest and pride, and Japan remained non-belligerent in relation to the war in Europe for twenty-seven months after Hitler's attack on Poland. It must be remembered that up to the day of Pearl Harbor Britain could never be sure that the United States would take action to stop any Japanese move into Southeast Asia, and appeasement of Japan appeared to be the only course to follow. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor meant that America and Britain were together from the start in the war against Japan, but then the very vigor of America's anti-Japanese reaction gave Britain a fresh cause for worry when the "Pacific First" agitation threatened to divert the main American war effort from Europe to the Far East.

Since 1945 Britain's economic stake in the Far East has remained considerable, but British power there has declined still further. Since India and Pakistan became independent, Britain has no longer been able to call on the Indian army in an emergency. Troops have been sent out from Britain to reinforce the garrison of Hongkong and to fight the Communist guerrilla revolt in Malaya, but even these comparatively small contingents have seriously reduced the strength Britain needs for defense against the threat of the mighty Russian host beyond the Elbe. A year

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ago Britain had no hope of being able to prevent a large-scale Chinese invasion of Southeast Asia, and before General de Lattre restored the French military position in Indo-China it was anticipated that Indo-China and Siam might go Communist at any moment. Nor was the American commitment in Southeast Asia any more definite than in 1941; for that matter, it was not definite in South Korea either until the North Korean tanks drove across the 38th Parallel last June, and even then the best informed political observers were unable for two days to predict how America was going to act.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that British policy after the collapse of the Kuomintang in China was based on the intention of doing everything possible to conciliate the new regime in Peking. The transfer of recognition was easier for Britain than for America because Britain lacked the close ties with the Kuomintang which had been formed through American aid to China during and after the war with Japan. The British recognition of Communist China was not originally meant to involve antagonism to American policy, because it was believed that American recognition was only a matter of time. But the Korean war made recognition out of the question for Washington, and the Chinese intervention in Korea brought the divergence of policies into the open. Britain was deeply alarmed at the prospect of unrestricted war with China, not only because it threatened the loss of Hongkong, and perhaps also of Malaya, but above all because the concentration of the power of the free world in the Far East was regarded as a "strategic diversion" which would leave Russia free to make mischief elsewhere.

The weak point in the British argument is that it is in one important respect out of date. It was formerly possible to have peace in the Far East while war raged in Europe because the interests and ambitions of Japan were separate from those of Germany. But because the Soviet Union extends from the Baltic to the Pacific, any war between the Soviet Union and the countries of the Atlantic Community would automatically be also a war in the Far East. There would inevitably be a struggle for control of Japan; Alaska might be a bridge for a Russian assault on North America; Eastern Siberia could be a zone of operations. Whether China were a belligerent or not—and in view of China's dependence on Russia for supplies of war material, it is by no means certain that Russia would wish China to be actively belligerent in a general war—there would be a fighting front in the North Pacific region. For this reason the build-up of United Nations forces as a result of the Korean campaign, far from being a "strategic diversion," has actually created a "position of strength" which did not exist a year ago.

It is for Americans to convince Britain of the strategic importance of the North Pacific region. But Americans should at the same time realize that there can be no stability in the Far East while American commitments remain vague and uncertain. In concrete terms, what is needed is an initiative for the conclusion of a Pacific Pact.

The difficulties in the way of such a Pact are perhaps greater than those which confronted the makers of the Atlantic Pact, but they are not insuperable, and the experience which has been gained on one side of the globe can profitably be applied to the other. The visit of Ambassador Dulles to Tokyo and Canberra has already done much to prepare the ground.

A Pacific Pact should include the United States, Britain, and France, together with Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Indo-China Union, Siam, Japan, and the Korean Republic. If India, Burma, and Indonesia wish to continue their present "neutralist" policies, they can stay outside, but the Pact could function without them. It would provide the firm framework for common defense which is at present lacking, and would create the political conditions necessary for effective economic aid to Southeast Asia. There is here a task for statesmanship no less urgent than that which has already been successfully undertaken for the security and rehabilitation of Europe.

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WHAT DOES THE SEDER CELEBRATE?

Modern Commentary on a Traditional Festival

THEODOR H. GASTER

WHEN the average Jew sits down to the Seder, he has a number of ideas about what he is doing. Unhappily, the ideas are, on the whole, quite fallacious. Yet they have become so widely accepted and so persistently encouraged by pulpiteers, pamphleteers, and other forms of apologists, that it becomes increasingly difficult to appreciate the Seder for what it really is, and any statement of its true significance begins to sound like heresy.

THE first point to note about the Seder is that it is *not* a mere commemoration—a memorial exercise or remembrance of things past. On the contrary, the whole point of the ceremony lies in the fact that it is a living experience. It is predicated, from first to last, on the simple and obvious truth that events transcend the moments of their occurrence. What this means is that anything which happens in history happens not only at a particular point in time but also as part of a continuous process and therefore involves as its participants not only a single generation but also—and more important—all who went before and all who follow after.

Take, for example, the American Civil War. What was secured by this conflict was not simply the Union of that particular day and age, but the Union *per se,* so that, in a wider perspective, both the Founding Fathers on the one hand and we ourselves on the other were also actively involved in it and personally shared in the victory which ensued. In exactly the same way, the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt involved also both the patriarchs of the past and their children's children of the future; for it validated the mission of the former and determined the destiny of the latter.

It is this ideal Exodus—this Exodus detached from a mooring in time—that the Seder really celebrates. Properly understood, it is no mere act of pious recollection, but a unique and inspired device for blending the past, the present, and the future into a single comprehensive and transcendental experience. The actors in the Seder story are not merely the particular Israelites who happen to have been led out of bondage by Moses, but *all* the generations of Israel throughout all of time. In an ideal sense, all Israel went forth out of Egypt, and all Israel stood before Sinai; and all Israel moved through darkness to the Presence of God, in the wake of a pillar of fire. Whenever the trumpets sound in history, they sound for all the children of men; and when the bell tolls, the echo lives on forever.

This is not a rarefied piece of modern rationalization. The conception of the Seder

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THE annual celebration of Passover is for perhaps a majority of Jews the most important festival of the year, bringing religious observance, as it does, so closely into the home and the family. It is not surprising, in view of the events of recent years, that the Seder has come to present itself in almost semi-political terms, becoming primarily a celebration of such concepts as democracy, freedom, and the like, with its more traditional spiritual meanings receding into the background. THEODOR H. GASTER, reviewing what the Seder has meant in the past, here tries to restore a truer balance. Dr. Gaster is professor of comparative religion at the Dropsie College of Hebrew and Cognate Learning in Philadelphia and lecturer in Semitic civilizations at New York University. He was formerly chief of the Hebraic section of the Library of Congress. His major work, published last year, is *Thespis: Ritual, Myth and Drama in the Ancient Near East;* he is also the author of *Passover: Its History and Traditions* (1949) and *Purim and Hanukkah in Custom and Tradition* (1950). Dr. Gaster was born in London in 1906, attended the University of London, and holds a doctorate in comparative religion from Columbia University.

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as an experience rather than a recitation runs like a silver thread through the whole of Jewish tradition and finds expression on almost every page of the Haggadah—the age-old "book of words" from which the narrative is related. *Every man in every generation,* says a familiar passage (quoting the Mishnah), *must look upon himself as if he personally had come forth out of Egypt. It was not our fathers alone that the Holy One redeemed, but ourselves also did He redeem with them.* Similarly, in the great Litany of Wonders—the famous *Dayyenu* poem, in which thanks are rendered to God for His benefits "doubled and redoubled"—it is not "they" but *we* who are said to have wandered for forty years and to have eaten manna in the wilderness, and finally to have reached the Promised Land. Everywhere the emphasis is placed squarely on the durative and ideal significance of the Exodus rather than on its punctual and historic reality. The Haggadah is the script of a living drama, not the record of a dead event; and when the Jew recites it he is performing an act not of remembrance but of personal identification in the here and now.

The Seder ceremony, said the sages, is valid only when the "bread of affliction" and the bitter herbs are actually before you. In a sense larger than they intended, these words epitomize its essential significance. *Wer nie sein Brot mit Traenen ass. . . .*

THE second point to note about the Seder is that its central theme is not—as commonly supposed—the Exodus from Egypt. That is merely its highlight. The central theme is the entire process of which that particular event happens to have been the catalyst. In Jewish tradition, the deliverance from Egypt is important only because it paved the way to Sinai—that is, to Israel's voluntary acceptance of its special and distinctive mission; and what the Seder narrative relates is the whole story of how Israel moved progressively from darkness to light, from the ignorance and shame of idolatry to the consciousness and glory of its high adventure.

All through the ages, the very structure of the narrative has evinced its purport. In ancient times it began, on a note of shamefaced humility, with the words, "At first our fathers were worshipers of idols" (or—in an alternative version: "A wandering Aramean was my father"), and ended with the triumphant chanting of the Psalms of Praise. Today, even though later accretions have somewhat obscured this dramatic sequence, it still opens (in most parts of the world) with a reference to the "bread of affliction," and closes—in a breathless and inspired climax—with the defeat of the Angel of Death. Moreover, the very sentence which begins with the words "Our fathers were worshipers of idols" ends significantly with the proud affirmation: "But now the Presence of God has drawn us to His service."

The theme of the ceremony is a continuous process, not a single event.

FROM this follows in turn the third point which it is necessary to observe if the Seder is to be properly understood—namely, that it is rooted in, and geared to, the particular and specific experience of a particular and specific group. What informs it is not—as is frequently taught and still more often believed—the mere abstract principle of freedom, but the distinctive and concrete process by which a certain people achieved and evinced it. For this reason, it cannot be universalized without losing its essence; to validate it in terms of general principles is to distort its basic spirit and to squeeze out of it the very sap of life. The Seder service—and, indeed, the Passover festival as a whole—is as indissolubly and exclusively Jewish as Independence Day is American. The fact that both are instinct also with universal ideals no more obliterates their particular natures than does the universal prevalence of marriage obliterate the individual quality and significance of each particular union. The Jew who says that he observes the Seder not because he believes in the mission of Israel or feels himself immerged in its career, but because he subscribes (emotionally or intellectually) to the general principle of freedom,

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is observing something which is really no Seder at all; for what he is doing is to substitute subscription to a general ideal for identification with a particular experience.

For another reason also it is dangerously misleading to interpret the Seder—or, for that matter, the Passover festival—as a celebration of freedom *tout court*. The word freedom means to us something entirely different from what it means in the context of the Passover story. It is, in fact, something of a mistranslation—an attempt to squeeze distinctive notions into the molds of our own thinking. Our concept of freedom has developed through divers channels and is today a fusion —or, perhaps, a confusion—of several originally distinct categories of thought. It is mixed up, for example, with ideas of sovereign independence, personal liberty, and democratic government; yet none of these ideas enters significantly into the Hebraic conception. In Jewish tradition, freedom, in the modern sense, is scarcely a virtue; at best, it is an opportunity. What matters is *volitional dedication;* and it is this and this alone that validates the Passover story. If Israel had gone forth out of Egypt, but not accepted the covenant at Sinai, it would have achieved *liberation*—that is, mere release from bondage—but it would not have achieved *freedom,* in the Jewish sense of the term. For the only true freedom, said the sages, is the yoke of the Torah. The only true independence is the apprehension of God.

THE genius of the Hebrew language expresses the point to perfection. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt is termed *gëullah.* We usually render it "salvation," but *gëullah* is really the act of claiming something for one's own; and in the adventure of the Exodus and of the mutual covenant at Sinai, God claimed Israel for His own and—more importantly—Israel claimed God. Therein, and only therein, did Israel achieve "salvation" and "become whole"; and it is this "salvation"—this *gëullah*—rather than any modern concept of freedom that the Seder expresses and hallows.

This is a point which bears stressing in view especially of the prevalent tendency to translate Jewish values into an alien idiom for the sake of rendering them "acceptable" to a modern age or of promoting what passes under the name of "interfaith understanding." Every year, as the festivals come round, we are treated in sermon, broadcast, and press release to the thesis that Passover celebrates freedom, and Chanukah the struggle for independence, and Purim the defeat of bigotry and prejudice, etc.; and there are not wanting amiable clerics on the one hand and accommodating Jewish spokesmen on the other who advocate the position that, by virtue of their universal implications and overtones, Jewish festivals can be observed even by Gentiles. To any informed student of religion—and to anyone, in fact, who thinks consistently—such a position (encouraged though it be by respectable national organizations) is absolutely and grotesquely fallacious; for it loses sight of the essential fact that popular festivals are not so much vehicles of creed and belief (though they are that too) as projections of group culture and group experience. No one can really celebrate a silver wedding except the family of the couple which has actually been married for twenty-five years; and by the same token, no one can really be part of a popular festival unless he is identified with the particular experience and process which projects it. Anyone who has been a visitor at a village celebration knows the difference between a sympathetic spectator and a direct and interested participant.

Moreover, the current tendency to transmute the particular into terms of the general in fact obscures distinctive values by propounding approximate and inadequate equations. The covenant at Sinai, for example, is not a Hebrew Declaration of Independence —as certain overzealous enthusiasts have claimed—and does not even belong within the same sphere of ideas; neither is Moses an Israelitic Lincoln. The value of the covenant at Sinai and of the career of Moses lie precisely in the fact that each is unique and not equatable with anything else in any other culture. Each constitutes a contribu-

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tion *sui generis*. The imperative need today is to emphasize rather than minimize the distinctiveness of Hebraic concepts—of *gëullah*, for example, as against "salvation," or of Torah as against mere law; while from the point of view of "interfaith relations," it would be well to remember that such relations, to be true and valid, must imply a rapport between faiths which retain their identity and integrity, and not a mere extraction from them of their highest common factor or a reduction of them to their lowest common denominator.

The Seder ceremony, with its emphasis upon local setting and historical occasion, is an inspired corrective to the cheap and superficial assertion that "all religions are basically the same," and a timely reminder, from year to year, that religion consists not merely in theology or ethics or metaphysics, but in the fusion of all three in the synthesis of experience.

IN ANOTHER sense, too, the Passover story is a continuous experience. For if it is true that the punctual event which it celebrates possesses also a durative character, involving the children of all generations, it is equally true that the particular historical occasion of the Exodus represents a situation which is in itself seemingly perpetual and which is by no means confined to a single moment of time. In a larger sense, the villain of the piece is not a particular Egyptian Pharoah—Seti I or Ramses II—but all the tyrants who have ever opposed Israel at any time; the Sea of Reeds is not the particular Lake Timsah (or any other similar expanse of water) which the Israelites had to cross on their way to Sinai, but all the obstacles which Israel has ever encountered throughout its career and which have yielded when the emblem of God was lifted above them; the manna is not the peculiar gum of *Tamarix gallica mannifera*—as learned botanists assure us—but that divine sustenance on which Israel has been fed continually while it has been roaming the world's desert to the place of Revelation—that "bread of angels" which has to be gathered afresh every morning and which (as the sages acutely observed) tastes different to every man. And the journey through the wilderness, in the wake of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, is the eternal progress of Israel toward the Kingdom of God.

THIS continuous significance of the story is brought out with rare genius and consumate artistry in the actual structure of the Seder ceremony and of the Haggadah which constitutes its "book of words." For neither is the product of a single age or environment —a mere heirloom or museum piece passed down intact and piously conserved. On the contrary, both are dynamic, not static creations—virtual kaleidoscopes of Jewish history —reflecting in their growth and development the various phases of Israel's career.

The form of the meal, for example, with the reclining on cushions, the preliminary dipping of parsley in salted water, and the consumption of eggs as an *hors d'oeuvre*, reproduces the typical pattern of a Roman dinner; and one may even suppose that the recital of the narrative and the conclusion of the repast with the chanting of psalms (Hallel) may have been modeled after the Roman custom of having literary works read at meals and regaling oneself afterwards with choral entertainment. Indeed, it is not at all impossible that the initial invitation to the hungry and needy, and the prescription that at least four (originally, three) cups of wine must be drunk, are likewise of Roman origin. For the fact is that it was common Roman practice for "clients" to wait upon their patrons during the day in order to pay their respects to them; and for this attention they were often rewarded by a formal invitation to join the company at supper (*coena recta*). Similarly, although the number of the cups of wine was explained, in rabbinic fancy, as derived from the number of different expressions used in the Bible to describe the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, it is not without interest that a normal Roman dinner actually entailed a minimum of three cups of wine; one for the preliminary libation to the gods; a second for the mutual toasting

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of the guests; and a third in honor of the host, or, under the Caesars, of the emperor. (To be sure, this minimum was usually exceeded; but so, too, are the minimum three or four cups of the Seder!)

On the other hand, the *afikomin*—one of the most prominent elements of the ceremony—is distinctly Greek, although the term now bears a meaning quite different from that which attached to it in Hellenic speech. The Talmud says that "men must not leave the paschal meal *epikomin*." This last word was really the Greek *epi komon* and meant "to go gadding around on revels"—the common nightly pastime of the "gay blades" of Hellas. The term, however, was subsequently misunderstood, and the sentence wrongly rendered: "Men must not leave out the *afikomin* after the paschal meal." The curious, unintelligible expression was then taken to refer to some special condiment or "dessert" which had to be served at the conclusion of the repast, and thence arose the custom of distributing small pieces of unleavened bread and calling them *afikomin!*

Similarly, when the door is opened "for Elijah," we are plunged at once into the Middle Ages, for the real purpose of this act appears to have been to provide an effective rebuttal of the terrible Blood Libel which asserted that Jews employ the blood of Christian children in the preparation of the matzah. The door was flung open so that all might have a chance of beholding the complete innocence of the proceedings.

Lastly, the secular songs and ditties with which the service now concludes and which constitute its most recent—though most familiar—feature, take us straight into Renaissance Europe. The famous *Ehad mi yodea* ("Who knows one?"), for example, has been traced by students of comparative literature to a popular and widespread "counting-out rhyme," the earliest specimen of which appears in Germany in the 15th century. (In that earlier version, incidentally, the successive numbers refer to God, Moses, and Aaron, the three Patriarchs, the four Evangelists, and the five wounds of Jesus!) Similarly, the *Had Gadya* ("Only One Kid") finds its earliest prototype in a 15th-century German folk song, *Der Herr der schickt das Jockli hinaus,* though, here again, the wide popularity of the song is shown by the fact that early versions of it have turned up in most European countries.

It should be observed also that, in Oriental lands, quite a different set of popular chants is appended to the Haggadah. The Sephardim, for instance, have many such chants written in the Ladino, or Judeo-Spanish, dialect current especially in the Levant; while elsewhere, Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Persian songs are in use. The inclusion in it of those "native" compositions likewise bespeaks the true character of the Seder as an expression of the total, continuous experience of the Jewish people.

EVEN the illustrations which adorn the older editions of the Haggadah conspire to create a picture of the entire stretch of Jewish history. The "wicked son" (who balances on one leg from one Seder to the next) is simply a Roman centurion; the one who is "too young to ask," and who holds up his hands like a questioning child, is taken directly from an earlier print of a slave in supplication before Hannibal; while the store-cities of Pithom and Raamses, which the Israelites were compelled to build for Pharaoh, are the walled towns of 15th-century Europe! All the centuries seem, as it were, to blend and blur.

Nor is it only in the accidental development of its form, or in the externals of the traditional "book of words," that the "continuous" character of the ceremony is evinced. Several of the poems which have been added to the narrative portion of the Haggadah revolve around the theme that Passover was the occasion not only of the deliverance from Egypt but also of *all* the main deliverances—and, indeed, of all the main events—in Jewish history. This, of course, is pious fiction, but the fact that it was invented shows that in the minds of successive generations of Jews the Seder has always exemplified a continuous and durative experience.

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If any further proof of this fact were needed, one has but to compare the Jewish Seder service with that of the Samaritans at the foot of Mount Gerizim. The Samaritans, as is well known, claim to be the last surviving remnant of the House of Israel, and to this day they still perform the paschal sacrifice upon the summit of their sacred mountain. Yet how different in content and spirit are the accompanying songs and devotions from those which inform the Jewish Seder! And the difference lies precisely in the fact that the Samaritan ceremony is essentially a memorial exercise, characterized by tedious and monotonous variations upon the Biblical tale, whereas the Seder is a recapitulation in a single observance of the entire Jewish adventure, gathering to itself elements drawn from almost every age and from divers climes.

For modern Jews, the Seder poses three particular problems about which a few words should be said.

First, there is the problem of the historicity of the Exodus. Modern scholarship has made it virtually certain that the Biblical narrative represents a foreshortened and anachronistic account of what really took place. In the light of historical and archeological research, it has become increasingly improbable that all of the tribes of Israel, as they later existed, ever went down to Egypt or came out of it. It is now generally conceded that the confederation was of later origin and grew up gradually on Palestinian soil after the Conquest, so that the story of a common ancestor who went down to Egypt with all his sons is as anachronistic as it would be to talk of "Uncle Sam" and his forty-eight children at the time of the Revolutionary War. Only a certain portion of what subsequently became the Children of Israel—according to some scholars, only the Joseph tribes—ever went down to Goshen; while the conquest of Canaan was the result not of a single coordinated invasion but of the successive expeditions and gradual infiltration of various Hebrew tribes, which had begun even before the Exodus and continued long after the arrival of the "redeemed" on Palestinian soil.*

If this reconstruction is correct, what happens to Passover? The answer is, once again, that Passover represents a continuous and durative experience of the Jewish people and therefore does not depend upon the historicity of any one particular event or upon the historical accuracy of even the Biblical record. What we must learn to realize is that the festivals and institutions of a people issue just as much out of their collective fancy and folklore as out of documentary fact. The assumption that the only validation of festivals lies in the factuality of their attendant legends is a piece of 19th-century rationalism which we ought to have outgrown. In all civilizations everywhere, festivals are "explained" and "justified" by myths and legends, and these are often cast in quasi-historical form. But the true origin of the festival does not lie in what is said about it, and to find the story unreliable impairs only the validity of the explanation but not of the institution itself.

The second difficulty which confronts the modern Jew in connection with the Passover story is its ostensibly miraculous element—the rod of Moses, the ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea. Not infrequently, the attempt is made to relieve embarrassment by propounding rationalistic explanations which are themselves, if anything, even more miraculous, or by resorting to Archbishop Trench's dictum that a miracle is a unique coincidence of natural phenomena rather than an act of supernatural interference. But here, too, such shifts are needless. We have but to realize that the Biblical narrative is a story rather than a record, a saga rather than a documentary account. Accordingly, it is perfectly natural that it should introduce romantic and fantastic embellishments drawn from the stock of popular myth

*The historical background of the Exodus is discussed at greater length in the writer's *Passover: Its History and Traditions* (New York, 1950), where a full description of the Seder, translations of the traditional songs, and a summary of Passover legends will also be found.

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and legend and actually paralleled in other cultures. Precisely the same thing has happened in the case of almost all national epics, as witness the "histories" of Alexander the Great, Arthur of Britain, and Charlemagne. The wonder-working rod or weapon, for instance, is a commonplace of folk tale in many lands, while the plague of frogs recurs in an Irish legend. As for the miraculous parting of the Red Sea, a similar story is related in Indic myth in connection with the flight of Krishna from his enemy, the tyrannical King Kamsa; while Greek writers recount that the Pamphylian Sea drew back and gave passage to the troops of Alexander the Great when they were marching against the Persian hosts of Darius III. The African tribe of Wafipas likewise relate that one of their kings once parted the waters of Lake Tanganyika, on his flight from his foes, by striking it with a rod dipped in the blood of a sacrificial lamb.

The recognition of such folkloristic elements should not be regarded as impairing the truth or authority of the Bible. If the Bible is the word of God, it is just as much a word as it is of God, and that means that its divine inspiration is channeled and expressed through human speech and in the idiom of human thought. Myth, poetry, and legend are part of that idiom. Moreover, we should be careful to draw the proper and necessary distinction between spiritual validity, or truth, and documentary fact.

It should be remembered also that to the primitive mind, many experiences which we would describe as suprasensory rank as outright disturbances of nature—that is, as miracles. When we are told, for example, that an angel escorted the hosts of Israel—an idea which recurs, incidentally, in other cultures—and that he interposed himself between them and the Egyptians, all that is really implied is a more primitive concept and expression of Providence. Similarly, the famous rabbinic controversy as to whether Israel was delivered directly by God or through the medium of an angel turns ultimately upon the profound distinction between a redemption accomplished through inner apprehension of the Divine and one which is believed to be wrought by the cruder and more primitive device of supernatural intervention.

LASTLY, there is the problem of nationalism. It is the feeling of many modern Jews that what the Seder really celebrates is the birth of a nation, but that, since the Jewish people have long since outgrown that earlier status, they can no longer identify themselves with the experience nor regard the ceremony as anything more than a historical memorial or an act of sentimental recollection. Their national loyalties, they claim, are to the lands of their political allegiance, and Judaism is simply a religion.

The truth is, however, that this problem—so often canvassed and so endlessly discussed—has no substantial existence but rests solely on semantic and terminological confusion. The essential pattern and character of Judaism were determined in a world which did not recognize such separate and latter-day categories as nation and religion. The religion of a people was the regimen of its corporate existence, not merely a bundle of beliefs and of practices issuing from them. The reality of Jewish life lies not in Judaism but in the collective Jewish people.

Judaism is merely an abstraction—the formulated quintessence of Jewish life—in precisely the same way that Hellenism is a mere abstraction of that which had reality and actuality in the Greek people. Accordingly, when a man determines his affiliation with the Jewish people by emotional or intellectual subscription to this abstract formulation, he is, in fact, a Judaist rather than a Jew, in the same way that a man who so subscribes to Hellenism is a Hellenist, but not a Greek.

This, indeed, is the basic lesson of the Seder ceremony. It is what distinguishes the question of the wicked son from that of the wise one. "The ceremony is performed," the wise son is answered, "because of that which the Lord did for *me*, when *I* came forth out of Egypt." And the wise son understands.

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THE LIBERALS WHO HAVEN'T LEARNED

Why the Soviet Illusion Still Lingers

GRANVILLE HICKS

LAST December the *Nation* celebrated its eighty-fifth birthday by publishing an outsize issue of the sort that has become almost obligatory for such occasions. Many prominent persons, including the President of the United States and a variety of politicians, labor leaders, and publicists, furnished congratulatory messages, and more than fifty men and women—college presidents, authors, clergymen, and so on—were listed as sponsors. Labor and philanthropic organizations, business firms, and individuals took advertising in which to express their good wishes to the magazine. When one examines the contents, however, one wonders what is being celebrated and who is doing the celebrating. For the issue, which is devoted to the problem of negotiating peace with Russia, may well serve in its total effect—however high-minded the intention and in spite of various articles that take a contrary position—as a piece of special pleading. There is a pro-Soviet bias in enough of the twenty-five articles to color the entire issue.

The existence at this moment of our history of pro-Russian sentiment among persons who call themselves liberals presents an interesting problem, which I intend to discuss. But first I had better explain and substantiate my charge of bias. The question is not whether peace should be negotiated or not. I myself am far from agreeing with those Americans who take it for granted that war with Russia is inevitable and oppose negotiation under any circumstances or on any terms. Nor is the question whether critics of our foreign policy have the right to speak out. Of course they do. The question is whether the account of the Russian-American situation given in the *Nation* corresponds to the facts or is distorted by preconceptions. I believe that we have here in the anniversary issue of the *Nation* views of Russia and of America so biased that, if they were widely held, they would seriously weaken this country either in the maintenance of peace or the waging of war.

The point cannot be proven without some tedious summaries and restatements, but let us get on with the chore. We can begin appropriately with the article by the *Nation's* editor, Freda Kirchwey. Speaking of Korea, she says: "That the North's attack was an 'aggression' is disputed only by Communists and their backers. It was an aggression because the Thirty-eighth Parallel, agreed upon by the occupying powers, was also recognized de facto by both Korean regimes. It was an accepted boundary, crossed by the northern army in force." With its quotation marks around "aggression" and its legalistic terminology, this is scarcely a forthright statement. Even so, the next word, inevitably, is "but." "But to say this and nothing more is again to blur meanings. For the attack was more than an aggression; it was also an act of civil war and revolution."

It turns out that in Miss Kirchwey's mind

THE problem of counteracting Soviet influence in this country is confused by the fact that the chief sources of political and cultural muddleheadedness are less the Communists than the fellow-travelers, and even more than either, those who, without being actual fellow-travelers, yet seem to nurture a tender solicitude for the interests of the Soviet Union and its political and cultural friends. GRANVILLE HICKS here examines this puzzling modern phenomenon of a brand of liberalism that finds itself in effect apologizing for a movement whose oft-proclaimed first task is to destroy liberalism. Mr. Hicks was born in New Hampshire in 1901 and is a graduate of Harvard. He is the author of numerous books, including *The Great Tradition* (1933), *Figures of Transition* (1939), *The First to Awaken* (1940), and *Small Town* (1946).

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any Russian aggression is an act of revolution. "The important fact," she writes, "is that, whatever Russia's ultimate purposes may be, *its interests are promoted rather than interfered with by revolutionary change.* [Her italics.] With no stake in the survival of free enterprise, it can consolidate its power in the very process of satisfying the most urgent social and economic desires of the majority. Those who get hurt are the few, especially in countries like Korea, with primitive standards of living and of political action."

Doubtless there is some truth in this: Communism continues to appeal to the exploited and oppressed, those to whom any change seems likely to be beneficial, and it has often introduced reforms, particularly in the ownership of land, that have in fact benefited large numbers of people. But Russia does not rely on the democratic support of the majority to consolidate its power, nor do such reforms for long survive the appetite for absolute power of the Soviet bureaucracy. It is concerned neither with economic security nor with any of the more fundamental freedoms, but with its own domination, relying wholly on force, as currently in Czechoslovakia, liquidating not only the leaders of the bourgeoisie but also those Communists who are not entirely subservient to Moscow. Its agents, its spies, even its generals—as in Poland and Hungary—take over the country its "revolution" has conquered, and proceed to loot the economy, depress the standard of living, render impotent the trade union movement, and prohibit all economic and social protest. To say none of this, to talk as if Russian expansion were principally a matter of "satisfying the most urgent social and economic desires of the majority," is to give a false picture.

YET Miss Kirchwey suggests that Russia, whatever its faults, is on the side of revolution, while the United States, it is equally clear to her, is actually or potentially on the side of reaction, and is concerned exclusively with the dogma of "free enterprise." Hence she views with suspicion any such American act as that involved in the intervention in Korea. She admits, as we have seen, that the invasion of South Korea was an act of aggression. She also admits that the prompt action taken by the United States and the United Nations raised the prestige of both. But she has her misgivings, which she places in the mouths of "many leaders of non-Communist countries": "They realized that a precedent might be in the making which could later be used to justify UN sanctions in case of rebellion—described as Russian-inspired—against a colonial power or an oppressive national regime." Again one can see that this might possibly be a danger in some speculative future, but it was certainly not the real and present danger that loomed so large last June, and about which one might have expected Miss Kirchwey to be properly anxious. The UN might conceivably be used to suppress a righteous colonial revolt—many things are conceivable. But Russia *did* in fact launch North Korea into an aggressive war.

Miss Kirchwey has a series of imperatives: "We must accept revolution as the dominant, inescapable fact of our time. . . . We must become, and quickly, the new sponsor of revolution, helping the peoples of the world to win all that communism promises or provides—plus liberty. . . . We must, if we are to seize a chance which may indeed be the last, rediscover our democratic beliefs, lost somewhere in the compromises of these years of shifting expediencies." That is the way Miss Kirchwey sees the world: a Russia riding the wave of inevitable revolution, opposed by a United States that has lost its democratic beliefs and processes.

J. Alvarez del Vayo, the *Nation's* foreign editor, is also a habitual skeptic so far as American policy is concerned. I remember an article that he wrote from Paris last summer, soon after the invasion of South Korea. Quoting "very intelligent observers" and other "authorities on international affairs," he first dwelt on the inefficiency and corruption of the government of South Korea and then referred to "grave doubts about the wisdom of America's 'letting itself be maneu-

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vered into an untenable position' or 'allowing itself to be bled white in Korea,' two favorite expressions." The moral was clear: South Korea couldn't be saved, and it wasn't worth saving anyhow. Somehow or other, the question of the North Korean regime—*its* inefficiency, *its* corruption, *its* bloody despotism—never was raised.

In the anniversary issue Mr. del Vayo employs a similar logic in talking about Germany. He argues, first, that the West is at least as much responsible as Russia for the German situation: "The fact is the Potsdam agreement was whittled away, bit by bit, by both sides; the initial breaches cannot be attributed solely to the Russians." He then points out that rearming Germany is dangerous business: "the prospect of a rearmed Germany allied with the West may precipitate rather than prevent Russian attack." And, because of Russia's pacific intentions, rearming is unnecessary: "The problem of Germany would appear hopeless but for certain indications that Russia wants to find a solution." In other words, the threat to peace comes primarily from the United States, the hope for peace primarily from Russia.

Carolus, the *Nation's* pseudonymous correspondent in West Germany, tries even harder than del Vayo to frighten his readers. "Viewed in this light," he writes, "the question fails to remain as naive or simple as Washington would make it seem: 'Is Europe to become Bolshevized and Russianized?' No, indeed! Moscow has forced Washington to consider another choice: 'Shall the European continent be dominated tomorrow by Russia or Germany?' To vanquish Russia—according to the formula proposed by General McCloy—would only mean handing Europe over to the Germans."

That these same arguments are currently being set forth by the West German Communist party does not, of course, invalidate them. No one can feel comfortable about the rearming of Germany. But surely, if one looks at the facts, Carolus and del Vayo grossly exaggerate the danger of the present German militaristic threat, and, what is more important, they flagrantly minimize the present danger of Russian aggression. Del Vayo barely mentions the armed police force in East Germany, and refers to "the supposed threat of Russian invasion." That the threat may be real is a possibility he and Carolus do not discuss.

One more article must be mentioned—"The War of Ideas," by Isaac Deutscher, a London journalist and the author of a controversial biography of Stalin. After quoting Sorel on the French Revolution, Deutscher asks, "Must the world now learn to see in the Russian Revolution also only a conqueror?" It is a surprising question for anyone to be asking in this period of history, and even more astonishing is Deutscher's reply in the negative. "Another decade or two of industrialization and education," he blandly says, "should give the Russian people so high a standard of living and so strong a sense of independence that they will have no use for Beria's concentration camps and spies, for *Pravda's* Byzantine language, and for an iron curtain." (How often one heard such words a decade or two ago!) "Democratic freedoms," Deutscher writes, "must of course be defended against the encroachments of Stalinism. But"—again the word is inevitable—"is not democracy imperceptibly being undermined and destroyed in its own name?"

Mr. Deutscher's logic is not always easy to follow, but I think he is saying something like this: Russia is currently a despotism, which is a bad thing, but the germ of revolutionary truth is in Russia just the same, and it will operate if the country is left in peace. On the other hand, the United States cannot organize itself to resist Russia without destroying democracy and allying itself with "international counterrevolution." He concludes: "it is the supreme duty of statesmen and leaders to explore every possible avenue toward a negotiated settlement." Now, if our statesmen entered upon negotiations with Russia with the assumptions in mind that I have just described, can anyone seriously doubt that the result would be

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appeasement and a great upsurge of Russian aggression?

The articles I have been discussing are not only significant in themselves; they are also significant in their relation to other articles that are not open to the same objections. What Andrew Roth and Rayford Logan, for example, have to say about colonialism seems reasonable enough, but in the context set by the above articles it has the effect of adding one more item to a bill of indictment against the democracies. A Mexican journalist, Jesus Silva Herzog, writes a diatribe against war—"no international war has been good for any people"—that would merely seem old-fashioned and irrelevant if one read it elsewhere, but here becomes an argument for appeasement. James Warburg's criticisms of our containment policy, Vera Micheles Dean's plea for a bloc of neutral powers, even Grenville Clark's discussion of world government—all these acquire, in this setting, implications that are probably not what the authors had in mind. There is nothing sinister or subversive about this, and perhaps the editors did not consciously plan the effect they have achieved, but there it is, and it is a natural consequence of the bias I have described.

THE general line of this bias is in the direction of giving the Soviet Union the benefit of almost every doubt, and the United States the benefit of very little doubt at all. Pro-Soviet liberalism seems to most of us a contradiction in terms, but it is a fact. And it is a fact with a history that makes it understandable. However paradoxical it appears, the magazine that calls itself "America's leading liberal weekly since 1865," however noble its intention, in some sense serves today as an apologist for Soviet Russia. To some extent, no doubt, this is a matter of individual viewpoints, but it is also a product of tendencies that have existed in American liberalism for many years.

The *Nation* has indeed been a liberal weekly since the end of the Civil War, but it has represented several different varieties of liberalism: it was one thing under Edwin Lawrence Godkin and another under Oswald Garrison Villard; it has become still another under Freda Kirchwey. Mr. Godkin's *Nation* need not much concern us. It could claim to be liberal, for Godkin was a disciple of John Stuart Mill and more intransigent than his master, but its brand of utilitarian, laissez-faire liberalism has never exerted much influence in this country, and Godkin, for all his brilliance and courage, had argued himself into a lonesome little corner before his death in 1902.

The *Nation* of Oswald Garrison Villard, however, is very much to the point. Mr. Villard took over in 1918, when the magazine had been moribund for a dozen years. Since he was an alert journalist and at the moment—largely because of his disapproval of American participation in World War I—a come-outer, a rebel, he opened the magazine to all those who quarreled with the status quo. In the midst of the hysteria that followed the armistice, when so much of the artificially induced hatred and fear of Germany and the Germans was released in a great witch hunt, when Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer was arresting thousands of "reds," when the state legislature of New York was expelling its duly elected Socialist members, when every strike was a Bolsheviki uprising, the *Nation* became a great bulwark not merely of liberalism but of liberty itself.

Lewis Gannett, writing ten years ago in the more reminiscent and considerably less solemn issue with which the magazine observed its seventy-fifth birthday, told what Villard's *Nation* was like:

> I doubt that there was ever such another journalistic heaven as was *The Nation* in the early post-war years. I came back from France that autumn of 1919 with one ambition in all the world: to land a job on Villard's *Nation*. I knew what I wanted, and was blissful when I got it: half-time at first, and small pay.
>
> Those were rousing days on Vesey Street. Every week's issue was a new adventure. The country was still in a state of war shock: it was blockading Germans, seeing reds under every bed, crushing strikes in the name of freedom. And yet there was a breeze of hope

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in the air, a stirring all around the world. . . . And there was exhilaration in fighting the whole wicked world.

Was there ever a day when the American press did quite as much lying? Even the "crusading" New York *World* waited until after the steel strike was crushed to tell a little truth about it; we on *The Nation* had fresh news, not printed in the big papers, almost every week. The *Times* and the other papers were killing off Lenin and Trotsky and crushing the Russian Revolution three times a week; we had our own reports. . . . It is almost impossible to believe today that a world could ever have seemed so full of hope—or so full of such sinister machinations as *The Nation* was privileged to expose, week after week.

There is further testimony, not as to the *Nation* but as to the mood of the postwar years, in the introduction that John Dos Passos wrote for the Modern Library edition of his *Three Soldiers*. That was a bitter book, and everyone had commented on its bitterness, but Dos Passos, looking back in 1932, knew that it was a hopeful book as well, that hope was what underlay its bitterness, and he wrote of the spring of 1919:

Any spring is a time of overturn, but then Lenin was alive, the Seattle general strike had seemed the beginning of the flood instead of the beginning of the ebb, Americans in Paris were groggy with theatre and painting and music; Picasso was to rebuild the eye, Stravinski was cramming the Russian steppes into our ears, currents of energy seemed breaking out everywhere as young guys climbed out of their uniforms, imperial America was all shiny with the new idea of Ritz, in every direction the countries of the world stretched out starving and angry, ready for anything turbulent and new, whenever you went to the movies you saw Charlie Chaplin.

THAT was what it was like in the years after the First World War. Academic communities were particularly susceptible to the mood of hopeful indignation, and at Harvard even an undergraduate from a respectable, Republican, middle-class family, an undergraduate who had to keep his eye mostly on the problem of financing his education, found that he was not immune. I joined the Harvard Liberal Club, and during one year —I think it was 1921-22, my junior year—I ate lunch daily at the clubhouse. The president that year was an energetic fellow, and when he discovered that a prominent liberal was about to visit Cambridge or Boston, he offered him the hospitality of the clubhouse. They came, and they talked, two or three or four every week, and there were always some of us to listen. We listened to anarchists, Communists, socialists, single taxers, pacifists, to people who proposed to save the world by birth control or prison reform or workers' education or vegetarianism, to advocates of the Plumb plan, friends of Sacco and Vanzetti, foes of the Versailles Treaty, to admirers of Ramsay MacDonald, disciples of Mahatma Gandhi, enemies of Benito Mussolini. And as if that wasn't enough, I used to go to the Ford Hall forum on Sunday evenings and listen to the same kind of people—often, of course, the same people.

The theory of the president of the Liberal Club was that the members would be interested in hearing any kind of dissenter—anybody who was against the status quo. Not that we were incorrigibly serious-minded; on the contrary, we were, from the point of view of the Young Communists of a decade or so later, frivolous dilettantes. But we did feel that the status quo was dreadfully, excitingly wrong, while at the same time we had no doubt that all the multifarious wrongness could be remedied if people of good will would work a little harder at it. That the reforms proposed and the systems expounded were more often than not irreconcilable we had sense enough to realize, but we regarded the will as more important than the scheme, and we felt that somehow the best features of all the proposals could be combined, when the time was ripe, in one flawless formula for utopia.

It was some years later that I came across Ralph Waldo Emerson's account of the Convention of Friends of Universal Reform held at the Chardon Street Chapel in Boston in 1840: "Madmen, madwomen, men with beards, Dunkers, Muggletonians, Come-outers, Groaners, Agrarians, Seventh-day Baptists, Quakers, Abolitionists, Calvinists, Unitarians, and Philosophers—all came suc-

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cessively to the top and seized their moment, if not their hour, wherein to chide, or pray, or preach, or protest."

IN MEMORY the 1920's seem to have been one grand, prolonged Chardon Street Chapel Convention of the fellowship of the enemies of the status quo. A few years after graduation from Harvard, when I was teaching at a college in western Massachusetts, I again saw the fellowship in action. There was a Sunday evening forum in town, and Scott Nearing came to praise Russia, John Haynes Holmes to denounce war, Norman Thomas to urge the next step toward socialism, Roger Baldwin to protest the latest outrage against civil liberty. We listened—instructors, students, and a handful of townspeople—and whether we agreed or not we had the comfortable feeling that all these eloquent advocates were on our side.

What we meant by the status quo included a lot more than politics and economics. Our quarrel was with the Philistines—the Babbitts, as Sinclair Lewis had taught us to call them—and anyone who would smite them was our ally. H. L. Mencken, with his constant and diverting warfare against the boobosie, was rather more of a hero in our eyes than, say, Robert LaFollette, for whom most of us had voted in 1924. We sympathized with the sober-sided pacifism of Devere Allen and Kirby Page, and we admired Powers Hapgood for casting his lot with the coal miners, but we got more excited about Judge Lindsey's views on companionate marriage and Bertrand Russell's program for sexual freedom. In 1921 Harold Stearns and thirty inquirers had published *Civilization in the United States,* which differed chiefly in its verbosity from the legendary volume on snakes in Ireland, and there were several similar collective analyses, including two that came out of the *Nation—Our Changing Morality* (1924) and *These United States* (1925). We welcomed them all.

Just as remarkable as the vociferousness of dissent was the inarticulateness of conservatism. There was plenty of flag-waving, plenty of bragging, plenty of abuse for the knockers, in the *Saturday Evening Post,* the *American,* and other popular magazines, but criticisms of the status quo were seldom squarely met. I remember how diligently the director of our local forum sought for a conservative who would debate on capitalism or the national administration or any similar topic. Finally a publicist for one of the large manufacturers of electrical equipment consented to debate with Norman Thomas on public ownership of electric power. Obviously he was accustomed to entertaining Rotarians, Kiwanians, and the members of women's clubs with a pleasant little chat on the wonders of electricity, and hadn't known what he was letting himself in for. As soon as the main speeches had been finished, and before there could be rebuttal or questions, he announced that he had to catch a train and fled through the hall, with Mr. Thomas following him to the door and hurling statistics after him. Wiser proponents of the status quo let prosperity speak for itself, and it spoke loudly enough to drown out the talk about Teapot Dome, dollar diplomacy in Central America, the suppression of strikes, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, the ineptness of Calvin Coolidge, and other unpleasant aspects of the 20's.

The dissenters were in a curious position. Along what might be called the cultural front they were winning constant victories, not merely in art and letters but also in morals. A fundamental sociological change had taken place, the rise to a new level of productivity and the shift to urbanism, and to a great extent the dissenters were merely calling attention to the implications of that change. And people were willing to listen because the time was ripe and also because they felt secure in their economic and political institutions. So the liberals were happy, because of their victories but perhaps also in part because of their defeats—because they could attack economic and political abuses to their heart's content without having to, or being able to, do anything.

IT WAS the heyday of the liberal weeklies. The *New Republic* had been founded in

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1914 as a critical journal devoted to progressive democracy. Mr. Villard took over the *Nation* in 1918. (The *Freeman,* founded in 1920, lasted only four years, perhaps because it was more austere than the others, perhaps because it was less adequately subsidized.) Neither the *Nation* nor the *New Republic* had a large circulation in the 20's, but they were influential, and they deserved to be, for they were vigorous, well-written, exciting magazines. Bliven of the *New Republic* was a lively journalist, and Villard was a master hand at a jeremiad. Frank R. Kent, one of the wisest of political reporters, wrote for both magazines. Other good journalists were staff members or regular contributors, and there was always a newspaperman somewhere or other to produce a story on a strike or a political scandal or a lynching that the newspapers wouldn't touch. And the back of the book, either book, was likely to be even better than the front. The Van Dorens ran the *Nation's* book pages, with Joseph Wood Krutch as drama critic and a frequent contributor of literary pieces, and Lovett, Littell, and Wilson successively edited the book section of the *New Republic.* Anyone was likely to turn up as a book reviewer, from H. L. Mencken to T. S. Eliot, from E. M. Forster to Mike Gold; there were entertaining "middle" pieces on all kinds of topics; and the poems were by the good poets.

Although the *New Republic* never paid well and the *Nation* paid badly, they constantly published first-rate work both by people who were well known and by people who were going to be. Among writers in those days almost the only conservatives were the strictly commercial writers, and most of them weren't conservative in any philosophical sense; they were merely smug. If you weren't smug, you were glad, even proud, to write for the *Nation* and the *New Republic.* The magazines were, in short, the principal organs of the united front of the dissenting intellectuals, the fellowship of the enemies of the status quo, and they profited enormously from that fact.

That united front, of course, was shattered by the impact of the great depression, but even before 1929 it had failed in its most significant test—the Sacco-Vanzetti case. Never had there been such unanimity of liberal opinion or such vehemence in its expression. Never, for that matter, had the liberals been more demonstrably in the right. Yet they were impotent. The issue was the status quo, and not only politicians and judges and college presidents but large numbers of ordinary and ordinarily inert citizens were determined to show the troublemakers who was boss. It is the anguish of helplessness one hears in Heywood Broun's columns, and hears echoed in John Dos Passos' outcry in *The Big Money*: "all right we are two nations."

THE Sacco-Vanzetti case was important in another way: it brought the Communists into action as part of the united front. The alliance was not altogether happy, and the Communists were accused of attempting to dominate the Sacco-Vanzetti defense, of using the case for their own ends, and of following tactics that endangered the lives of the two anarchists. Even, however, when they granted that there was truth in these accusations, the liberal intellectuals continued to regard the Communists as inevitable, though sometimes uncomfortable, allies—as the more respectable reformers at the Chardon Street Chapel may have regarded the Groaners and the men with beards.

The whole problem of Communism was one that the fellowship of the enemies of the status quo didn't have to face up to in the 20's, and didn't. So far as Russia was concerned, most liberals wished the revolution well, and some were enthusiastic. If necessary, they could find easy ways to straddle: Communism was all right for Russia, but.... If, however, Russian shortcomings could be admitted, the enemies of the status quo—except for a handful of orthodox socialists, especially European socialists who had had some experience with the Bolsheviks—took it for granted that Russia was on their side, simply because the defenders of the status

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quo feared and hated Russia with peculiar intensity.

American Communists, not very numerous and constantly preoccupied in this decade with factional battles, profited from the tolerance of Russia and the general tolerance of all forms of dissent. The Communists scorned—and in this period openly scorned—time-serving reformers and wishy-washy liberals, but the reformers and liberals could not scorn them and did not want to. Uncouth and dogmatic the Communists might be, but their opposition to the status quo was their ticket of admission to the united front. When the *New Masses* was founded in 1926, with a subsidy from the Garland Fund, it included on its executive board John Dos Passos, Paxton Hibben, Freda Kirchwey, James Rorty, and Rex Stout, and listed among its contributing editors Sherwood Anderson, Van Wyck Brooks, Stuart Chase, Waldo Frank, Lewis Mumford, Eugene O'Neill, Elmer Rice, Carl Sandburg, Upton Sinclair, and Edmund Wilson. Most of these people must have believed that the *New Masses* was going to be another organ of the united front, as the old *Masses* had in fact been. Actually, of course, the Communists controlled it, and it was purely an instrument of Communist propaganda, but, nevertheless, many of the liberal names remained on the masthead for a number of years.

All this reveals a naivety hard to credit at the present time, but even if the non-Communists had been considerably more alert than they were, the Communists would have been the beneficiaries of the disintegration of the liberal front that came in the early years of the depression. Day by day, as unemployment grew, it became apparent that something had to be done. We all know what was done: Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President, and he and his advisers, with the consent of a terrified Congress, introduced a variety of hastily contrived and often self-contradictory schemes, which saved the country. But in 1932 it was not apparent that Roosevelt had either the will or the ability to save the country, and that is how it happened that fifty-two artists and writers signed a manifesto supporting the Communist candidate for president, William Z. Foster.

I have suggested that the liberalism of the 20's was undiscriminating and sometimes even silly, and its disintegration under the impact of the depression does point to the existence of serious weaknesses. But it had its good qualities, too, its hopefulness and its generosity of spirit, and its influence proved to be far stronger than most people would have guessed in the early 30's. After all, the New Deal was largely built out of the ideas of the dissenters and reformers of the preceding decade.

Many liberals of the 20's moved into the ranks of the New Deal, where they functioned more or less fruitfully. Many others, however, as I have said, were convinced that nothing less than drastic economic and social change would suffice, and these intransigents, with a few exceptions, turned to the Communists for leadership. "Nobody in the world," said Lincoln Steffens, who was one of the fifty-two signers of the Foster-Ford manifesto, "proposes anything basic and real except the Communists." Edmund Wilson, who in 1931 had urged American radicals and progressives to take Communism away from the Communists—"and take it without ambiguities or reservations, asserting emphatically that their ultimate goal is the ownership of the means of production by the government and an industrial rather than a regional representation"—was willing by 1932 to take the Communists along with Communism, and he, too, signed the Foster statement. John Dos Passos, also a signer, warned liberal intellectuals that the class war had begun, and organized committees to aid the Communist victims in that struggle.

That part of the story is familiar enough, and there is no need of going into it here. The point is simply that the united front against the status quo had collapsed because the status quo had collapsed, and the question was no longer what you were against but what you were for. The Communists

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knew, had always known, what they were for, whereas no one else—or so it seemed to many besides Lincoln Steffens—did. Moreover, the Communists were doing something, and doing it with passion, violence, and complete self-sacrifice. They were fanatics, and fanaticism was what the desperateness of the times seemed to call for.

The incompatibility of liberalism, in any of the many meanings of the term, and Communism need not be argued. The Communists, in their more candid moments, have always boasted of it, and the liberal intellectuals who embraced Communism in the early 30's were quite consciously repudiating liberalism. They were finished with liberalism as an attitude—"To hell with the open minds," Steffens wrote Ella Winter—and they were finished with liberalism as a program of progress through reform. They were talking now in terms of drastic, radical change and of clear-cut, violent alternatives. Even John Chamberlain, whose fellow-traveling was distant and brief, wrote a book called *Farewell to Reform*. "The situation," he wrote, "looked upon with intelligence and considered as a long-range proposition, can lead to but one of two personal conclusions: it can make one either a cynic or a revolutionist."*

The old fellowship of the enemies of the status quo had been destroyed. From the point of view of those who had caught a revolutionary vision, particularly but not merely the Communists and their fellow-travelers, an individual was not automatically an ally because he was against the government or the capitalist system. The important question was what he proposed to do about capitalism, and if his proposals differed from yours, he was more to be reviled than a Union Club full of Wall Street bankers.

Such a situation at least promised a clarification, and if it had endured, perhaps a new liberalism would have defined itself, but history took a new turn and another united front came into existence, this time a united front against fascism. At home the New Deal had made revolution, at least for the time being, both impossible and unnecessary, and in any case capitalism as practiced in New Deal America seemed highly preferable to fascism. If, therefore, the Communists had adhered to revolutionary principles, they would have lost much of their liberal following. But they didn't: the exigencies of Soviet foreign policy sent them spinning through the united front into the people's front and the democratic front. Within the new fellowship of the enemies of fascism there was all the excitement of the 20's and an even more bustling activity.

If it is easy to forget the substantial virtues of the liberalism of the 20's, it is almost impossible to remember the values of the anti-fascist united front. Even the simple fact that the Communists and the fellow-travelers and the liberals were right in opposing fascism has been obscured by the silly, when not vicious, talk about "premature anti-fascists." As for the seriousness, the industry, and the self-sacrifice of many of the anti-fascists, they are recalled, often enough, only with embarrassment. Yet it is true that for a few years the majority of American radicals, progressives, liberals were working together and working effectively.

We prefer to forget that united front because it was contrived and used by the Communists and therefore fell apart at the moment that Molotov and Ribbentrop touched their pens to a piece of paper. Its major dogma had been the absolute wickedness of Germany; its minor, less emphasized but never forgotten assumption was the benevolence of Russia. Now opposites met, in the miraculous operation of the dialectic, and the result was not synthesis but chaos.

The question of the benevolence of Russia was crucial all through the period of the anti-fascist front. The Communists, after 1935, said less and less about the necessity for a revolution on the Russian model; socialism was still the ultimate goal, but it was to be achieved in some vague future and under

*My own experience and involvement with the Communists is described in the essay, "Communism and the American Intellectuals," in the book, *Whose Revolution?* edited by I. D. Talmadge.

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the aegis of Jefferson and Lincoln rather than Marx and Lenin. What mattered, the Communists said, was Russia's firm stand on our side, the anti-fascist side. More and more intellectuals, however, were skeptical about Russia's benevolence, and called attention to the purges that followed the assassination of Serge Kirov, the mockery of the trials, the slaughter of the Old Bolsheviks, the growing adulation of Stalin. Many of these critics found in Trotskyism a way of reconciling, for a time at least, intransigence and disillusionment. But for the majority, prior to August 23, 1939, the thought of Russia's anti-fascist role was enough to stifle doubts. As Louis Fischer and Vincent Sheean confessed after the pact, it even persuaded persons who were in Russia and could see what was happening to tell less than the truth.

Both the *Nation* and the *New Republic* had ridden the tide of the new united front, though both were affected by the growing dissatisfaction with Stalin's Russia and the *Nation* had its anti-Stalinist enclave. After the pact both magazines opened their pages as never before to critics of Russia. A new alliance of anti-fascist, anti-Communist liberals began to take shape, but it was inevitably submerged by the problems of the war, which took on a new urgency after the fall of France. And then history played another trick, making Russia not merely "our" ally but the official ally of the United States, and one saw how persistent had been the faith in Russia among the united fronters. From 1941 to 1945, when criticism of our ally was bad manners, the old belief in Russia as a special case grew stronger and stronger. How, as various writers repeatedly asked in the *Nation* and the *New Republic,* could we regard Communism as a failure when we saw how bravely the Russians fought at Stalingrad?

Thus pro-Soviet liberalism was given vitality enough to survive in the difficult atmosphere of the postwar years. There are, I suppose, three elements in the present pro-Soviet compound: the Communists, both party members and close fellow-travelers; "leftist" liberals; and a sprinkling of deluded pacifists. Of the pacifists one can say simply, they are mistaken. For the Communists a case can be made but not in the terms they currently use, nor is it likely to convince many Americans since it rests on the assumption that Soviet imperialism is the chosen instrument of world revolution and on a willingness to equate what goes on in Russia with socialism. If the pro-Soviet front has any strength in America today, it is because there are still liberals who provide the verbal cloak of "social betterment" that hides the nakedness of the brutal revolutionary totalitarianism that is the Communist aim.

That the front still does have some strength, in spite of Soviet aggression, was demonstrated by Henry Wallace's campaign for the presidency and by the Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace held in New York two years ago. As one read the list of sponsors of the conference, one recognized the names of many of the faithful, but in addition to the faithful and in addition to those who might properly be described as gulls, there were the pro-Soviet liberals, dozens of them.

How many blows the pro-Soviet liberals have withstood—the trials, the pact, what happened in Czechoslovakia, what happened in Yugoslavia, what happened in Korea! They have been forced to yield ground: they no longer try to maintain that the Soviet Union is a utopia; they do not deny the existence of Russian aggression; they do not pretend to believe that Tito is the Wall Street agent the Cominform says he is; they usually refer with contempt to the American Communist party. And yet Russia remains for them on the right, the revolutionary ("progressive") side. The mistakes and shortcomings of the United States are pitilessly analyzed in the anniversary issue, as is customary in the *Nation* the year round, but Russia's faults and offenses, if they are not ignored or explained away, are made to seem of secondary importance in view of her revolutionary ("progressive") role.

The pro-Soviet liberals are probably not

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altogether happy about their present position, but, when I try to imagine what they have to say to and for themselves, I can guess where they find comfort and strength. "At least," they must say, "we do not belong to the reactionary front. We are not engaged in persecuting government employees and school teachers and radio actresses, nor are we clamoring for atomic war. We have not enlisted under the banner of Senator McCarthy."

This defense has an air of plausibility, but, when one looks at it carefully, it is a further demonstration of how little the pro-Soviet liberals have learned. Certainly some (actually not many) of the ex-Communists and ex-fellow-travelers, as well as a lot of other people, seem to assume that nothing matters but the defeat of Communism and that all anti-Communists are their friends, but if the past two decades teach any lesson, it is that the wrongness of one extreme does not prove the rightness of the other. The pro-Soviet liberals are confirmed in their cause because they are against persecution, heresy hunting, and atomic warfare. In 1919 they—or, if they are under fifty, their ideological ancestors—denounced A. Mitchell Palmer and opposed Allied intervention in Russia. How, they ask, can they be wrong in denouncing Senator McCarthy and opposing preventive war? The answer is that on these scores they aren't wrong, but that doesn't make them right about much else.

The 20's asked what a man was against, not what he was for, and for the 20's that was a natural attitude. It was not an attitude, however, that encouraged discrimination. One was vaguely favorable to half-understood systems and schemes because they were opposed to the status quo, and it was in this sense that the liberals of the 20's were "for" Russia. The events of the past twenty years, however, have shown most people the need for more careful distinctions. We have seen how vulnerable the status quo is, and have learned the irresponsibility of its wholesale condemnation. For that matter, we have learned how vulnerable civilization is, how arduous the struggle to preserve it may be. And we have learned—many of us in its own sorry school—that Communism is not just another scheme, another idea. It is one of the real absolutes of our time, perhaps the only absolute, and by its nature, by virtue of what it has made of itself, it permits of no neutrality. The liquidation of neutrals is one of its specialties.

To call Communism an absolute is, I realize, to invite an absolute anti-Communism, and the absolutists do exist and grow more numerous. That, however, is one of the chances that have to be taken in these constricted times. At least the assumptions of the absolute anti-Communists are in the open and can be openly examined and openly fought, whereas the assumptions of the pro-Soviet liberals are concealed—often, one suspects, from such liberals themselves. Self-deception, as I have been trying to say, is nothing new in the history of American liberalism, but today, when it serves so well the purposes of those for whom deception is a basic strategy, and when it effects such a profound corruption of thought and culture, it is a luxury we cannot afford.

The *Nation*, of course, is not of a single piece: by no means all of its political articles represent the pro-Soviet liberal point of view, and its book section is something else altogether. In its basic editorial policies, however, it tends to speak for a small segment of liberalism—small but not insignificant. One looks back with regret to the time when the *Nation* spoke for all the liberals and was a better magazine than it is today, but we cannot hold the *Nation* responsible for the fragmentation of liberalism. It happened, and we have to deal with the situation as best we can. The *Nation*—and, unhappily, it is not alone in this respect among "progressive" organs and organizations – has preserved what was weakest and blindest in the old liberalism, and has carried over attitudes that once were merely irresponsible but now are dangerous.

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PARK FOREST: BIRTH OF A JEWISH COMMUNITY

A Documentary

HERBERT J. GANS

IN NOVEMBER 1949, the author of this article completed a study of the Jews of Park Forest, Illinois. The study had one especially intriguing aspect: under its very eyes—in the midst of answering questionnaires, as it were—Park Forest's Jews gave birth to a young, awkward, but unmistakable Jewish community. It was an entirely natural birth, and the witnessing of it was an illuminating introduction to some of the whys and wherefores of Jewish life and of present-day Judaism in America.

Obviously Park Forest is not Flatbush or Scarsdale or Detroit—so undoubtedly there are limitations in what it has to teach us. On the other hand, when we think of the present composition of American Jewry—which is by and large second generation, mostly business and professional in occupation, and overwhelmingly middle class—perhaps Park Forest is not so atypical after all. What we can see happening there may be chiefly different from what is occurring in other locales only in being more visible and accessible to the student. Park Forest may thus turn out to be a by-no-means unrepresentative Jewish neighborhood in today's rapidly changing American scene. Here, in any case, is what happened, and how.

PARK FOREST is a garden-apartment housing project located thirty miles south of Chicago. The project, privately developed, was started in 1947, when the Chicago housing shortage was at its height. The first tenants moved in on August 30, 1948, and for two years they continued to come in as new sections of the village were completed. By November 1949, there were 2,000 families—nearly 8,000 people—renting garden apartments at $75 to $100 per month. One hundred and forty-one of these families were Jewish. Of these, about thirty had not been in the village long enough to have relations with the other Jewish families; another fifteen were "mixed marriages," with both husband and wife having rejected any identification as Jews; and the remainder, approximately one hundred families (including a few mixed marriages), 5 per cent of the project, formed a fledgling "Jewish community."

In Park Forest the accent is on youth; the project naturally attracted the people most sorely pressed for housing: veterans with children. The men average thirty to thirty-five years of age, the women somewhat less (anyone over forty is generally considered old). Most of the men are at the beginning of their careers, in professional, sales, administrative, and other business fields. (Only four of the men interviewed owned their own businesses.) Although not long removed from the GI Bill of Rights, they were in 1949 already earning from $4,000 to $10,000 a year—most of them perhaps around $5,000. Few of the men, and few of the wives even, are without some college experience, and educationally, the Jews as a whole stand

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HERBERT J. GANS presents here a documentary account of the gestation, birth, and infancy of a new Jewish community in the United States of today. Though this is obviously a special kind of setting—a newly built middle-class housing project—it is also possible that it throws considerable light on the character of the present interest of American Jews in Judaism, Jewish education, and Jewish community life, as well as on the kind of "Jewish content" that seems to them appropriate for the needs of their children and themselves. Mr. Gans originally began to study Park Forest as a subject for a master's thesis on political participation and apathy; intrigued by the special role and problems of the small group of Jews in Park Forest, he returned, with the help of a grant from the College of Jewish Studies of Chicago, to study them by questionnaires, interviews, and observation. Mr. Gans was born in Cologne, Germany, in 1927, and came to this country in 1940. He took his master's degree in the social sciences from the University of Chicago in 1950, and is at present working with the Chicago Housing Authority.

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even higher than the rest of the Park Forest community. Ninety per cent of the Jewish men interviewed have college training, 60 per cent hold degrees, and no less than 36 per cent have graduate degrees.

The Jews of Park Forest dress as do the other Park Foresters, enjoy similar leisure-time activities, read the same newspapers, look at the same movies, hear the same radio programs—in short they participate with other Park Foresters in American middle-class culture. They observe few traditional Jewish religious practices; the village's isolation from synagogues and kosher food shops has probably discouraged observant Jews from becoming tenants, and brought problems to those few who did.

Not only do Park Forest Jews live like other Park Foresters, they live with them. Whereas most American cities have "neighborhoods" dominated by one ethnic group or another—in atmosphere and institutions if not in numbers—this is not true of Park Forest. Most Park Foresters live in what are called "courts"—*culs de sac* surrounded in circular fashion by twenty to forty two-story garden apartments. Each "apartment" is actually a house, built together with five or seven others into a single unit. Privacy is at a minimum and each court is almost an independent social unit. Many of the Park Foresters find all their friends in their own court—but this is not the case with the Jews. The Jewish families are scattered all over the village, and only rarely are two Jewish families to be found in adjacent apartments. Yet in just one year, a Jewish community consisting of informal groups of friends, a B'nai B'rith lodge, a National Council of Jewish Women chapter, a Sunday school, and even a Board of Jewish Education had emerged.

How did this happen?

FROM the very beginning it seemed to be important to Jewish Park Foresters to "recognize" whether or not any of their neighbors were Jewish. And the widespread labeling, in America and Europe, of certain Mediterranean-Armenoid facial features as "Jewish," plus the monopolization of certain surnames by Jews, has resulted in a stereotypical formula of recognition, used by Jews and non-Jews, which is accurate more often than not.

One early resident related: "I saw Mrs. F. in the court a couple of times. . . . I thought she looked Jewish. With me, there's no mistaking it. Then someone told me her name, and I went up to talk to her. Finally we talked about something Jewish, and that was it."

"Jewish mannerisms" were also used to establish, or at least guess at, the other person's Jewishness. "The woman across the street, her actions were typical New York, so we recognized them as Jewish immediately. . . ." People very skillfully explored each other through conversations, attempting to discover whether the other person was Jewish or not, and offering clues to their own Jewishness. "She's been told I'm Jewish, and I know she's Jewish, we haven't discussed it, but she uses Jewish expressions she wouldn't use in front of other people." Others turned the conversation to favorite foods: "It was a slow process, we told them what kind of food we like, corned beef, lox. . . ." Sometimes there are no symbols or formulas which can be applied, and people find out by accident: "I asked before Passover if they wanted macaroons, and we found out."

Many Jewish Park Foresters had known each other previously, had mutual friends or acquaintances elsewhere, or bore introductions from mutual friends to "go look up so-and-so when you get to Park Forest." The people with such previous contacts, however loose these may have been, quickly established friendships and often became "charter members" of social circles which then attracted strangers. In this respect, the Jews differ sharply from other Park Foresters, most of whom knew no one and had no "introduction" to anyone when they arrived in the village. (Even in cities as large as New York and Chicago a surprisingly large number of Jews know or know of each other, because there are relatively few groups which they join, few temples which they can belong to, and few neighborhoods in which they choose to live.)

BARELY had this informal network of friendships and acquaintances sprung up among the first Jews moving into Park Forest (it did not, of course, preclude friendships with non-Jewish neighbors—though these, as we shall see later, were rather different in quality from the friendships with Jews), when two formal Jewish organiza-

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tions were set up—a chapter of the B'nai B'rith and a chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women. Both enrolled only about forty members—those who, for various motives and reasons, were "organization-minded," and those, especially women, who had no Jewish neighbors and wanted to meet Jews from other parts of the village.

Both almost immediately found a purpose: "doing something" about the Jewish children of the growing Park Forest community. And through them steps were soon taken to establish the single most important Jewish institution in Park Forest: the Sunday school.

By June 1949, less than a year after the first residents moved in, the chapters of the B'nai B'rith and National Council of Jewish Women were already fairly well established. Eighty-six Jewish families were now living in the rapidly growing project. Passover had come and gone; the handful of Jewish people who observed it in the traditional way had banded together to order *matzos* and all the trimmings from Chicago. The men who had organized the B'nai B'rith lodge and now formed its ruling clique had begun to talk of a congregation. Some of them were "Jewish professionals," men who make their careers within the American Jewish community; others were men who had been active in big-city Jewish affairs and whose social life had been oriented around a congregation and its activities. But it was generally agreed that Park Forest's prime problem was a Sunday school for the forty-odd eligible children then in the village, and for the others who were to come.

THE B'nai B'rith leadership met one evening and sketched out the organization of a Sunday school as part of a congregation—Reform or Conservative, it was not yet clear—to be established in the village. At a meeting with a delegation of women from the Council, however, the latter refused to help organize a congregation, insisting that what Park Forest needed was a Sunday school now, and a congregation later, perhaps. One man said of the women: "They don't care for Jewish values, but they recognize that they are Jewish and they need a Sunday school because the kids ask for it. . . . They want a non-sectarian school." The women, on the other hand, accused the men of trying to take over the community for their own political ambitions, of wanting a "Jewish Community Incorporated."

Eventually a steering committee of four men and four women was formed to proceed with the organization of a Sunday school. While the administrative organization and the budget were being prepared, largely by the men, the school's curriculum was left to a young Chicago rabbi who had become interested in Park Forest. Quite unexpectedly to some, he supported the women in their rejection of a congregation, and formulated instead a Sunday school that would involve the parents in their children's Jewish education: "As we train the children," he told the parents, "you will have to train yourselves. . . . You'll have to move toward a community center and a synagogue eventually. . . ." The parents' major contribution would be to prevent such inconsistencies as would be apt to arise from not practicing at home the content of the Sunday school curriculum.

At a meeting of parents there was a sharp reaction to the rabbi's plans. A large number of those present objected to the curriculum proposed; they wanted a "secular" Sunday school, one which would teach the child *about* Jewish traditions, but which would not put pressure on the parents to *observe* these traditions in the home. For the reasons that they did not want a congregation, they did not want a school that would involve them either. The committee resigned and a new committee was formed.

But exactly what type of "Jewish content" should be brought into the school, and how? The new committee did not have sufficient Jewish background to set up any kind of Jewish curriculum, secular or otherwise, and called for aid from a Jewish professional family that lived in Park Forest, the husband a group worker, and his wife a trained Sunday school principal. The group worker was finally successful in devising a formula that reconciled the two sides, and the basis of the reconciliation is revealing: "The children will not be taught that parents have to light candles; the children will be informed of the background of candles. . . . We're teaching the child not that he must do these things, we just teach him the customs. . . . Why, we even teach them the customs of the Negro Jews . . . and that the customs have been observed for many years, and are being modified."

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In "YANKEE CITY'S" Jewish community* the conflict over the synagogue was between generations, the foreign-born and the first-generation American. In Park Forest, where almost everyone is native-born, the conflict over the Sunday school was of a different nature: it was between those who wanted what may be called an *adult-oriented* community and those who wanted a *child-oriented* one.

The adult-oriented community is the traditional (but not necessarily Orthodox) one whose activities are focused around its congregation of adults, and in which the role of the children is to become Jewish adults and assume an adult role. The men who wanted a congregation, with its Sunday school, were thinking of such an adult Jewish community, training its children for eventual membership in the organized Jewish group. In a child-oriented community, the community's energy is focused almost exclusively around the children, around their problems and needs as Jewish children—but, of course, as the adults see these needs. Thus, the women wanted a school for the children and, as became clear, not one that would involve the adults in Jewish community life.

The focus of Park Forest's problem—and conflicts—lies in the family. The Sunday school, much as other Jewish institutions, is recognizably an ethnic rather than a religious institution—more correctly, an American reaction to an ethnic situation—which transmits ethnic behavior and identity; the Jewish home, however, is run by American middle-class behavior patterns. The women feared that the contradictions between the traditional Jewish home, whose features are now incorporated in the Sunday school curriculum, and the American home, which embodies their primary present-day values, would lead to family tensions. So, although they wanted their children to learn about traditional Jewish life, they did not want it brought home.

The situation in Park Forest, then, is that many parents reject involvement in the cultural-religious aspects of the Jewish tradition for themselves as adults, while they demand that their children involve themselves to the extent of learning about this tradition, without, however, getting so involved as to wish to practice it. The fruit of this might well be a Judaism that ends rather than begins with Bar Mitzvah.

Why, however, did the parents want the children to go to Sunday school at all? First, and quite important, was the fact that the children, in contrast to the parents of Park Forest, having found their friends within the court without concern for ethnic origin, would see their non-Jewish friends leave for school on Sunday mornings. As one mother explained: "Our kids want to get dressed up and go to church too. The Sunday school [the Jewish one] will give them something to do." A few children were actually sent to the Protestant Sunday school a couple of times, but the overwhelming majority of the parents found this intolerable, so the pressure from the children was translated into parental demand for a Jewish Sunday school.

Second, and this is perhaps the more important reason, the parents wanted to send their children to Sunday school because they wanted to make them aware of their ethnic identity, to acquaint them with Jewishness through Jewish history and customs. (Quite frequently, this explanation was complemented by the qualification, ". . . so that later he can choose what he wants to be." The notion that the Jewish child would have a choice between being Jewish or not Jewish, a decision he would make in adolescence or early adulthood, was voiced even by parents who admitted their own continuing confusion as to how to act, and as to the identity they had and wanted to have.)

But why become aware of ethnic identity and of "Jewish customs"? Because parents want their Jewish identity explained to their children, often as a *defense* against hardships they might run into because they are Jews. Representative of this rather widespread sentiment was the comment: "A Jewish child, he's something different, he's never one of the boys in a Gentile group, even if he's the best guy, he's one of the outsiders, the first to get abused, and if he doesn't know why, it's going to be a shock. It's part of his training, the Sunday school, he needs it."

A number of parents of six- and seven-year-olds were particularly clear in their hopeful expectation that Sunday school would sup-

*W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (Yale University Press, 1945).

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ply the children with answers about their identity. It seems to be at that age that questions first develop in the children's play groups as to what they are, in terms of religion or nationality. Sometimes the children are stimulated by a remark made in school or kindergarten, sometimes by something overheard in parents' conversation. One child may thus discover that he is Protestant, and that there are also Catholics and Jews. He brings this information to the group, which then tries to apply these newly discovered categories to its members. Soon the children come home and ask their parents what they are, and are they Jewish, and perhaps even "Papa, why do I have to be Jewish?" Here the Sunday school is asked to come to the rescue. One father reported of his son now in Sunday school: "He can probably tell me more than I can tell him."

IT IS not only the Sunday school that is child-oriented. The entire community shows itself child-oriented: during the first fourteen months of existence, the largest part of its organized adult activities was for the children. B'nai B'rith nearly collapsed because its leadership was drawn off into the task of establishing the Sunday school; and after the school had been set up, the lodge immediately went to work on a Chanukah party which it hoped to make an annual event. Even among those who wished to found a congregation, a goodly portion explained they wanted it exclusively for the sake of the children: "I don't believe in praying . . . in God . . . I want it for my son and daughter. I want them to know what it's like. I have had the background . . . I remember I enjoyed it at the time."

The Jewish holidays have become perhaps the chief mechanism of teaching and reinforcing Jewish identity. All the "happy" holidays—Pesach, Purim, Sukkoth, and Chanukah, especially the last—are emphasized and made into children's festivals. At Chanukah time 1948, when the Park Forest Jewish community consisted of less than twenty families, the problem of Chanukah versus Christmas first presented itself to Jewish parents. A year later, the problem loomed so large in everyone's mind that people discussed it wherever they gathered. The women's Council devoted its November meeting to "Techniques of Chanukah Celebration," that is, techniques of competing with Christmas.

By late November, the non-Jewish friends of the Jewish children are eagerly awaiting Christmas and Santa Claus. Naturally, the Jewish children are inclined to join in these expectations, and ask their parents for Christmas trees. In 1948 and 1949, the parents acted quickly. One mother explained: "The F.'s had a big menorah in their window, that was very fine, maybe I'll do the same next year. . . . I could put my little menorah up there, I could wire it, is that O.K., we could have different color lights—no that's too much like Christmas." Another parent said: "My child wanted a Christmas tree and we talked her out of it. . . . I make a fuss about Chanukah to combat Christmas, I build up Chanukah and she appreciates it just as much."

Other parents told how they decorated the menorah, and even the entire house, and used electric candles instead of wax ones. They tried hard to emphasize and advertise Chanukah to the child, and at the same time to exclude the Christmas tree and its related symbols from his environment. Parents were very bitter about the Jewish families who displayed Christmas trees. "In our house we do certain things, and in other Jewish houses they don't, and the children ask questions. . . . It's very confusing. . . ."

In the process of making a children's holiday in December (or sometimes in November) just as good as the Christian one, the parents' adult participation in the holiday is forgotten, and Chanukah, more than any other holiday, becomes completely child-oriented. In this, ironically, the fate of Chanukah closely resembles that of the American Christmas, which has tended to be transformed from a solemn religious festival to a day of delights for children.

MEANWHILE, the adults were not nearly so lavish in providing for their own needs as Jews.

Park Forest has a number of families, either Reform or mildly Conservative, whose social life before moving to Park Forest took place largely in or near the congregation of their choice. Some of these people did not hesitate long before joining a wealthy congregation in Chicago Heights—especially those whose own income and social position

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were more or less equal to that of the Heights community. In addition there are a number of families, probably less than ten, who have maintained enough of the traditional system of religious attitudes and ritual practices to be called Orthodox or Conservative. They favor the establishment of a congregation, preferably Orthodox or Conservative, in the village.

But for the remainder, the large majority of the Jews, religious institutions and practices play no role. Of forty-odd families interviewed, more than half reported that they observed no customs or holidays, and had not attended synagogues or temples "for years." Ten reported attending High Holiday services only; seven attended on High Holidays, some other holidays, and a few Friday evenings during the year.

For the majority of Park Foresters, the problems of traditional observance (such as the kosher home) or of attending religious services simply do not exist. They spend Friday nights as others do in Park Forest, entertaining, or going out occasionally when Saturday is not a workday for the man of the house, or staying at home if it is. Saturdays are reserved for work around the house, shopping, visiting, and taking care of the little things suburbanites have no time for during the week.

There are, however, two religious patterns which are still being observed, not universally but by many. First, as has been indicated, there are those holidays and traditions that concern the children. Second are those aspects of death and birth that relate the Jew to his parents. Several of the men remarked matter-of-factly that they were not interested in religious observances, but added just as matter-of-factly, "except of course *Yortzeit*" (anniversary of the death of a parent). Another said: "The only thing we did—at my son's birth we had a rabbi at the circumcision, mostly for my wife's parents, they would have felt bad." (Circumcision is probably all but universal. As for Bar Mitzvah, as yet there are almost no children as old as thirteen.)

Some people celebrate the Jewish holidays by spending them with parents or in-laws, not as religious holidays but as family get-togethers. One woman explained, jokingly: "I believe Rosh Hashanah should be two days, Passover too, for practical purposes. One day we go to his family, the other to mine."

There have been some attempts to establish the beginnings of a religious institutional system in Park Forest. In January 1949, when the Jewish population did not exceed twenty-five families, the group already had a rabbi-substitute, a gregarious "Jewish professional" who roamed through the Jewish community and from his Conservative background ministered to occasional religious needs. "Someone needed Hebrew writing on a tombstone, they were told to call me, someone else wanted *Yizkor* [prayer for the dead] or *Yortzeit* services, they called me. . . ."

Before Rosh Hashanah 1949, two men, one an early comer, the other just arrived, tried independently to set up a *minyan* (minimal group of ten) for the High Holidays. Since communication between Jewish tenants in the older courts and the newer ones had not yet been established, these men never knew of each other's attempts. Both were unsuccessful. Various groups have talked sporadically about setting up a regular congregation.* Most interesting in this demand for a congregation is the reason given by many supporters: "They'll have more respect for us, to show that we have arrived, that we're not merely a bunch of individuals."

The "they" referred, of course, to the non-Jewish neighbors. This congregation movement was thus born not entirely of a religious impulse, but of one which attempted to demonstrate the solidarity and respectability of the Jewish community to the rest of Park Forest. Significantly enough, the area of Park Forest in which this congregation movement sprang up was populated by a large number of small-towners and Southerners who from the first indicated that they did not think favorably of Jews.

UNINTERESTED as Park Foresters may be in "the Jewish heritage," they are nevertheless very much Jews. Clearly and unmistakably, that is, they remain both matter-of-factly and by conscious design, members of identifiably Jewish groups. This Jewish group may be another Jewish couple with whom they spend much of their time; it may be a regular and more or less stable group

*In November 1950, after the completion of this study, a congregation was finally organized.

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which gathers, in full or in part, almost every weekend and on special occasions. These groups make up the informal Jewish community, the "spontaneous" community that did not require professionals and organizers to be created.

For the most part, this informal community exists at night. In the daytime, when only housewives and the children inhabit Park Forest, the Jewish housewife participates in the general court social life. She interrupts her household duties to chat with a neighbor, while "visiting" over a morning cup of coffee or while watching the children in the afternoon. In most cases, there is no distinction here between the Jewish and the non-Jewish housewife; they belong together to the bridge and sewing clubs that have been established in many courts. There are a few courts in which religious or ethnic cliques of women have formed, and where "visiting" is restricted to such groups. In most courts, however, there are few ethnic distinctions in daytime social life. This applies even more to the men when they participate with other men in court life on weekends (and occasional evenings) through athletic teams and poker clubs. As one of the women observed: "The boys are real friendly. I imagine they don't think about it [ethnic distinctions] but the women have different feelings. Women have little to do; they talk about it in the afternoons."

At night, however, in the social relations among "couples," the Jewish husband and wife turn to other Jews for friendship and recreational partnership. As one person summarized it: "My real close friends, my after-dark friends, are mostly Jewish; my daytime friends are Gentile." Of thirty Jewish residents who listed the names of Park Foresters they see regularly, ten named only Jews; ten named mostly Jews, and one or two non-Jews; ten named a majority of non-Jews or only non-Jews. And many of the people who named both Jews and non-Jews pointed out, like the person quoted above, that their most intimate friends were Jewish.

THERE are, of course, all types of friendship circles in this informal Jewish community. One of the largest groups is made up predominantly of older, well-to-do Park Foresters, many of them previously active in big-city Jewish congregations and groups. Most of these men are employed by business or industry, or in the non-academic professions (medicine, dentistry, law, engineering). A second group consists largely of young academic intellectuals (research scientists, teachers, writers) and their wives. A third is made up of people who have only recently emerged from lower-middle-class Jewish neighborhoods, and are just exploring, with occasional distaste, the life of the middle- or upper-middle-class American Jew. And there are many others.

It is easy to explain the tendency to find friends in one's own group, even when this takes one from one's own front door, as it does in Park Forest. As the Park Foresters say, "It's easier being with Jews"—it is psychologically more accommodating, and there is less strain in achieving an informal, relaxed relationship with other Jews: "You can give vent to your feelings. If you talk to a Christian and say you don't believe in this, you are doing it as a Jew; with Jewish friends you can tell them point blank what you feel."

The in-group attitude, and the anti-out-group feeling that often goes with it, are expressed most frequently at the informal parties and gatherings where the intimate atmosphere and the absence of non-Jews create a suitable environment. Often these feelings are verbalized through the Jewish joke—which generally expresses aspects of the Jew's attitude toward himself, his group, and the out-group—or through remarks about the *goyim*. At parties that are predominantly Jewish, it is of course necessary to find out if everyone is Jewish before such attitudes can become overt.

One man, who had been converted to Judaism in his twenties, when he was married to a Jewish girl, became disturbed, at an informal party, over a discussion of how to inculcate Judaism into the children, "and keep them away from the *goyim*," and felt it time to announce that he had been until a number of years ago a member of a Christian denomination. The declaration broke up the party, and upset many people. After that he felt: "From now on, they'll be on their guard with me, they've lost their liberty of expression, they don't express themselves without restriction now. At a party, if anybody says something, everybody looks to see if I've been offended and people are taken into a

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corner and told about me." This man has adopted the Jewish religion, is bringing up his children as Jews, and has been more active than the average person in Jewish community life. Yet he is no longer a member of the Jewish in-group, although he remains a member both of the Jewish community and his smaller Jewish group. In his presence, the group sheds the informality and intimacy of the in-group, and is "on guard."

THERE are many Jewish Park Foresters who reject these in-group attitudes as "chauvinistic," and when asked about their friends, are quick to reply that they do not distinguish between Jews and non-Jews in choosing friends. Yet as one said: "The funny thing is, most of our friends are Jewish even though we say we don't care." And to quote another: "I think we should try to have friends that aren't Jewish. I don't like the fact that all my friends are Jewish."

But these Jewish Park Foresters, too, feel that they differ from the majority of the non-Jewish Park Foresters—and not only because their friends are Jews. The focus of these feelings of difference was summarized by one person: "I have a friend who is not Jewish who told me how fortunate I was in being born Jewish. Otherwise I might be one of the sixteen to eighteen out of twenty Gentiles without a social conscience and liberal tendencies; he is cruel and apathetic. . . . Being Jewish, most of the Jews, nine out of ten, are sympathetic with other problems, they sympathize, have more culture and a better education; strictly from the social and cultural standpoint a man is lucky to be born a Jew."

These feelings have a basis in Park Forest reality. The Jews are distinguished by a feeling of "social consciousness," by concern over political and social problems, by a tendency toward a humanistic agnosticism, and by an interest in more "highbrow" leisure activities: foreign films, classical music, the fine arts, and in general the liberal intellectual-aesthetic leisure culture of America, and perhaps the Western world. There seem to be proportionately more Jews than non-Jews in Park Forest who participate in this culture. Jews who seek other people with whom they can share these attitudes and interests tend to find other Jews. This culture—which includes an important proportion of Park Forest's Jews—itself is largely devoid of Jewish content, and the Jews who come together in it would seem to do so not primarily because they are Jews but because they share a culture. When Jewish problems are discussed by these people (and they are discussed), they are seen from a generalized world view, rather than from an in-group perspective.

Just as Jews form a large proportion of those interested in "culture," they form a large proportion of those interested in the self-government of Park Forest, and in other local activities. Although in November 1949 the Jews made up only 9 per cent of Park Forest's population, eleven of thirty-seven candidates in the first two village elections were Jewish. All but one member of the first Board of Education, and half of the original six-man Board of Trustees that runs the village, are Jewish. The community newspaper was started by a group of women many of whom were Jewish; the American Veterans Committee and the local affiliate of the Democratic party were organized with the help of a number of Jewish men.

IF FOR a moment we take a broader view and consider non-Jewish Park Forest, we discover that the Jewish community is only one of three quite similarly organized ethnic-religious groups. Both the large Catholic group (close to 25 per cent of the village population is Catholic) and the smaller Lutheran one also consist of a religious body, men's and women's social organizations, and a more or less extensive informal community. The two Christian groups, unlike the Jewish one, are organized primarily for adult activities, but also emphasize the Sunday school. Both communities developed much more quickly than the Jewish one—largely because there was much less internal disagreement as to what to do and how to proceed—and both were in 1949 already engaged in building programs. The Catholic and Lutheran groups are primarily religious bodies (although they are in part ethnic groups), and have fewer members who reject the group culture. Those who do reject it can quite easily "resign" and become part of the large amorphous body of Americans not strongly identified by religious or ethnic group, something that is much more difficult for the Jew.

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In its first year, the Jewish community was very sensitive to the problem of anti-Semitism. Just as every newly arrived tenant would try to recognize other Jews, he would also try to discover the attitudes of non-Jewish neighbors toward Jews. This led quickly to the sprouting of a grapevine which transmitted actual cases, suspicions, and imagined occurrences of anti-Semitism throughout the Jewish community, and sometimes dominated conversation among Jews. A number of people complained strongly that there was a great deal too much talk about anti-Semitism.

Actually, there has probably been very little anti-Semitism in Park Forest. In the interviewing, which covered thirty-five of the fifty-five courts occupied by November 1949, only seven people from seven different courts mentioned incidents they considered to be anti-Semitic. For the most part, these were cases of exclusion, Jewish women (and sometimes children) being left out of some formal and informal activities of the Christian members of the court. There are a number of courts where Jewish and non-Jewish women have split off into separate cliques. It would perhaps be surprising to expect these rather traditional forms of segregation to be absent, especially since Park Forest harbors so many people from different parts of the country, including small-town people from regions generally not friendly to Jews. And one must always ask how much this segregation results from the tendency, described above, of Jews to seek each other out as friends. And it seems certainly true that if anti-Semitism played any role in the formation of the community, it was the fear and expectation of anti-Semitism rather than actual experience of anti-Semitism in Park Forest, on the part of either children or parents.

On the other hand, there are many "liberals" in Park Forest, so that friendly and unquestioned social mixing of Jews and non-Jews is perhaps more common here than elsewhere. This spirit is perhaps typified by an incident that occurred early in the life of the village. A door-to-door salesman asked a non-Jewish resident to point out the Jews in the court because he did not want to sell to Jews. The next day the company was requested not to send any more salesmen to the village.

Park Forest is a new and growing community; it has changed since this study was made, and will continue to change in the future as its present tenants are replaced by others or decide to stay and settle down. Nevertheless, the Jewish community has already become oriented around a number of elements which are not likely to change.

Whereas their parents were not only socially "clannish" but culturally different from their non-Jewish neighbors, the adult Jews or Park Forest are "clannish" but culturally not very different. (Or, rather, their cultural distinctiveness, when it exists, is not along Jewish lines.) Their adjustment to American society and their present status can be described as one of cultural assimilation and continued social distinctiveness. Thus, the Jews of Park Forest remain an ethnic group, albeit different from the parental one.

It is this feeling of Jewish togetherness, to sum up, which provides the impetus for child-orientation, for the parents' insistence on a Sunday school, their transformation and use of the Chanukah holiday, and the unending attempt to indoctrinate the child with a sense of Jewishness.

It is noteworthy that whereas in most cultures the transmission of the group's *esprit de corps* is carried out unconsciously through the children's imitation of, and partial participation in, adult activities, in Park Forest this transmission has become conscious, has become indoctrination—without the parents accepting for themselves the things they are passing on. This no doubt affects the very process of transmission, the thing transmitted, as well as the way the child receives it. Nevertheless, the transmission does take place. Child-orientation is the mechanism that would seem to guarantee the existence of the ethnic group for another generation, even when the adult carriers of the group's culture are ambivalent about it, or have rejected it. So long as Judaism is the curriculum for teaching and transmitting Jewishness, the traditional behavior patterns will be studied, discussed, and taught. However, the high cultural assimilation of the group makes improbable the incorporation of traditional Jewish elements into the rules of daily life.

A major force in the development of the Park Forest Jewish community has been the "Jewish professional," who so far has been

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the spearhead, "the catalytic agent," as one called himself, in the process of community formation. It was Jewish professionals who helped bring the Jews together, ministered to their early religious needs, started the men's social organization, tried to organize a congregation, helped in forming the Sunday school, resolved the crisis that resulted, and have since supervised Jewish education in the village.

The Jewish professional is a new man on the Jewish scene. He is not a rabbi, but a leader of adults, a youth worker, a teacher, a fund-raiser, a social worker, a contact man, a community relations director, etc. The Jewish professional may not have special training in how to start a Jewish community, but he is expert at being Jewish, something other Park Forest Jews are not. Sometimes this expert Jewishness is a part of his background, and his reason for becoming a professional; sometimes it is the result of a desire to work in the Jewish community, among Jews rather than non-Jews. Sometimes the expert's Jewishness may be only a career, and the professional's activities in these organizations are for him a means of advancing in his career. Whatever his motives, however, the Jewish professional, rather than the rabbi, would seem to have taken over the initiatory role and the largest part of the work of creating the formal Jewish community. In the informal community, his influence is much smaller.

A final factor for an understanding of the Park Forest Jewish community is the sexual division of social labor that takes place within it. The Jewish informal community is based on the Jewish woman. It is she who generally inaugurates and stimulates acquaintances and friendships, who founds the social circles and sets their pattern and content. She has in addition the opportunity of establishing all-female groups which reinforce the groups of couples. Most of the men seem to lay less emphasis on ethnic association, and although there are some all-Jewish male groups, male activities are more likely to take place in groups which more or less ignore ethnic distinctions. Perhaps that is why the B'nai B'rith lodge has been less successful than the women's group in uniting its membership into an active and developing organization. The larger concern of the women with Jewish education, and their more intense interest in the Sunday school, obviously arise from the fact that the women generally have the major role in bringing up the child. In general, the women live a greater part of their life within the Jewish group, and are more concerned with it and about it than the men. In Park Forest, and presumably in communities like it, they seem to be the most influential element in determining the nature of "Jewish" activities. At a somewhat later stage these activities may be handed over to the men.

As to how representative the events and processes that took place in this one Jewish community are, the writer would not be able to hazard a guess, and certainly his study, of a single community and not comparative, would throw little light on this question. But his impression is that it is very unlikely that they are unique to Park Forest. Perhaps in other American Jewish communities these developments are masked by the fact that the group is not so distinctively limited to young married couples with one or two children as it is in Park Forest. In all of them, however, it would seem reasonable to suppose that developments such as have been described must play an increasingly important role in the future Jewish community life in America. Certainly, it would not be claiming too much to suggest that the Park Forest Jewish community offers much illustrative and prophetic material as to the next major stage in the process of Jewish adjustment to American society: the stage in which it is the relations between the second and third generations, both American-born, not the relations between a foreign-born first and a native-born second generation, that are the crucial ones.

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PURE POETRY, IMPURE POLITICS, AND EZRA POUND

The Bollingen Prize Controversy Revisited

PETER VIERECK

NOT even Ezra Pound's most intolerant belittlers have ever been able to deny his trail-blazing function, whether or not one likes his trails. Therefore one wonders what his feelings must be at watching his pious, humorless disciples—for example, in the recent symposium *An Examination of Ezra Pound*—turn his rebellious originality into a frozen image as stereotyped as that of the Georgians and late-Victorians whom he overthrew. The contrast between his vitality in the 1920's and the stuffiness of his 1950 praetorian guard is brought out by reading his vivid collected *Letters*, also recently published, side by side with *An Examination*. The former book is alive. Much of the latter book is dead with precisely that kind of pompous, pretentious, deadly deadness that Pound was overthrowing in 1913.

The appearance of these two new contrasting books has reopened the dormant Pound controversy of 1949. Both friends and foes of his Bollingen prize award will find effective new ammunition in the symposium. You can prove Pound's disciples to be pure aesthetes or anti-Semitic fascist sympathizers, depending on which particular essays you pick from the book. If you pick Edith Sitwell's chapter, for example, you will find a brilliant appreciation of Pound's artistic techniques, the kind of appreciation that—basing itself on the noble if unreal assumption that art is radically distinct from life—motivated the original Bollingen award. However, not all the contributions are of the same order as Edith Sitwell's. If you turn to certain of the others (perhaps closest to Pound's own intention), you find Pound's fascism and anti-Semitism accepted as inseparable from his poetry. Reading these disciples, one is forced to wonder to what extent his racist "anti-usury" gospels are catching on among the more "advanced" English students and the avant-garde. As Robert Gorham Davis has noted ironically in a review of the book: "After the long religio-critical hiatus of the forties, it is now proper, as in the thirties, to tie up literature with political reform. But what reform it is! . . . Pound is made the master again, and Eliot the shrewd and talented disciple. Money Reform and Fascism become more fashionably topical than Original Sin and Anglicanism."

From the *Examination* symposium, let us cite a few examples of this new topicality. John Drummond finds "cogent reasons for Pound's admiration of Fascism" and coyly suggests that Italy's lack of new ideas "al-

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THE awarding of the Bollingen prize for American poetry to Ezra Pound in 1949 aroused a controversy that is still very much alive. At the outset, the question at issue was whether a poet who in his work expressed fascist and anti-Semitic views, and who during the war had broadcast over the Rome radio applauding the Nazi extermination of Jews, was a suitable recipient for a prize. However, the controversy broadened out wildly on both sides: the opponents of the award in many cases used the occasion for a general attack on the whole body of modern poetry, while the supporters of Pound responded with an uncompromising aestheticism that in fact has often ceased to be aesthetic and bordered on the political. PETER VIERECK, himself a well-known modern poet, attempts here to crystallize the significance of the controversy for poetry and culture in our times. Mr. Viereck's volume of poetry, *Terror and Decorum*, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1949; his latest volume of poetry is *Strike Through the Mask*, published in 1950. Associate professor of history at Mt. Holyoke College, he is also the author of two volumes of political and historical analysis, *Metapolitics: From the Romantics to Hitler* (1941) and *Conservatism Revisited* (1949).

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most forces one to maintain that Fascism's greatest crime was not that it was too hard on the Italians but that it was not hard enough." Max Wykes-Joyce sees Pound's message on fascism and usury as an essential part and purpose of his *Cantos,* and declares: "Fascism carried the implication of something positive. . . . It was based on the progressive prosperity of the whole people; it typified for the many honest Fascists what Pound calls 'the increment of association,' that economic element possible only in a group of people working towards a common end: thus 'the increment of association . . . is affirmed in every fascio clamped to a public building.' . . . His detestation of universal usury accounts for his anti-Semitism. His is economic anti-Semitism. That he is not racially anti-Jewish can be abundantly proved. . . . Among the usurers, however, there are so many Jews; and against that sort of Jew Pound is justly merciless."

"Merciless" is a strong word. Does the "just" kind of mercilessness include the torture and gassing and burning alive of millions? Pound himself evidently thought so when on the Rome radio he approved of the Nazi extermination of Jews.

In the same symposium, Henry Swabey is another who puts first stress on Pound's supposed political wisdom. Swabey denies that Pound was "an advocate of despotism" and then quotes without demur a panegyric of Mussolini's movement by the Fascist propagandist Signora Agresti. Both Wykes-Joyce and Swabey gloss over Pound's racism by asserting that—some of his best friends were Jews! Swabey adds such *non sequiturs* as that Pound "is far less consciously 'racial' in outlook" than was the Jewish statesman Disraeli. He enthusiastically cites the isolationist attacks of the Roosevelt-haters on Roosevelt's "aggressive" foreign policy, and on the "distasteful facts about Pearl Harbor," in order to prove a fact that is unfortunately all too true: "Pound is not the solitary crotchet that the mesmeric press would have us believe and was certainly not alone among Americans in deploring Roosevelt's policies." With a prim contempt for this decadent democracy of alleged rackets and racketeers, Swabey concludes that ideologically "Pound is a genial, if exacting, guide and, although vilification of him and his work is the latest 'racket' in America, one who has studied his work cannot quit the subject without a word of gratitude."

There is also Peter Russell, earnest and sincere editor of *An Examination,* founder of the Ezra Pound Society of London, who has arranged for publication in England of some of Pound's pro-Axis and allegedly treasonable broadcasts from Radio Rome. He says gleefully of the *Cantos* what the anti-Poundians dolefully have been maintaining all along: "To try to separate the poetic essence from the didactic substance of the poem would be valueless pedantry or, at best, adolescent romantic aestheticism."

It is not intended to suggest by these above quotations that a purely literary appreciation of Pound is impossible. It goes without saying that the valuable firm of New Directions—which published the *Examination*—and its able editor, James Laughlin, have no use whatever for fascism or racism. Moreover, in this same *Examination,* Hugh Porteus, Hugh Kenner, G. S. Fraser, and others offer fascinating and mainly literary insights. Only a witch-hunt mentality could accuse them of sharing the views of Russell, Swabey, Wykes-Joyce, etc., merely because they all appear in the same book. Examples of both types of Poundians can be multiplied *ad infinitum* if we begin citing the Little Magazines. The fairest thing is to recall that the world contains both Gentle Poundians (the pure aesthetes) and Tough Poundians (those who find in his "just mercilessness" to Jews and usurers a "genial guide"). And both can validly quote scripture (the Book of Ezra?) to their purpose.

Similarly, to draw a strikingly relevant parallel, there were Gentle Wagnerians (those who loved Wagner as a pure musician) and those Tough Wagnerians who preached his proto-Nazism and anti-Semitism and who included Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Adolf Hitler. In Wagner's day those who,

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like Nietzsche, prophetically feared Wagner's political influence were ridiculed: how could a "crank artist" ever be a political "danger"? Yet in the century that followed, Wagner's metapolitical credo became the main fountainhead of Hitler's ideology.* The prior example of Wagner is perhaps an answer to the Gentle Poundians, who sincerely detest Pound's fascism but deem it no future menace in America. They are ignoring the current resurgence—slight but potentially dangerous—of semi-fascist isolationist rabble-rousers in our yellow press, who ominously treat fascism as the opposite of Stalinism instead of its twin.

On the other hand, much of the moralizing hue and cry against Pound's fascism and Jew-baiting comes not from sincere anti-fascists but from the envy with which the dwarfs of mediocrity forever regard originality and experimentalism in art. Without telepathy and an impossibly subtle lie-detector machine, we cannot estimate exactly how much of the anti-Pound hue and cry can thus be explained, but certainly a high percentage is involved.

Such is the company one inevitably gets oneself into. Philistia, for example, would exploit my own objections to Pound's receiving the Bollingen prize in a fashion never intended by me: namely, as a demagogic weapon against everything original and novel in poetry, everything that challenges the reader to effort. Yet this playing into wrong hands, though admittedly a danger, is not an ineluctable danger. It all depends on how the matter is handled (just as, for example, anti-Communism can or cannot play into reactionary hands, depending on how it is handled). To illustrate this by taking the example nearest home: I am becoming impatient to the point of brusqueness when told that my criticism of certain critics and poets is "unconsciously serving the philistines." The charge would be true if I criticized Pound or the epigones of Eliot in order to praise Edgar Guest or at best Austin Dobson. But the charge becomes a mere diversionary maneuver when I criticize the stifling Pound-Eliot cult in order to praise the more sensuous lyricism of such poets as Yeats, Hart Crane, Theodore Roethke, Richard Wilbur, and Louis Simpson.

THE position of really serious, *non*-philistine opponents of the Bollingen prize gets so misrepresented in most periodicals that the following must be stressed (though it ought not to be necessary to stress it): most of us were never impugning the committee's motives or indicting all modern poetry. For us the issue is whether, as some "new critics" believe, form and technique can be considered apart from content and meaning. The sympathies of the committee were not with Pound's politics. Judging by their much debated press release, their sympathies were with the widely held belief—a belief I consider unhistorical and psychologically false but not at all "fascist"—that artistic form can be considered apart from its content and moral meaning.

But it should have been clear that the *Pisan Cantos* were far from being a non-political ivory tower of pure aesthetic formalism. On the contrary, fascism and anti-Semitism compose one of the essential "myths" of these and the earlier *Cantos*. Both earlier and later *Cantos*—and no question of insanity arises with the earlier ones*—proclaim that same fascism and racism which Pound preached over Mussolini's radio.

In *Partisan Review*, May 1949, George Orwell wrote of Pound and his broadcasts: "Some time ago I saw it stated in an American periodical that Pound only broadcast on the Rome radio when 'the balance of his mind was upset.' . . . This is plain falsehood. Pound was an ardent follower of Mussolini as far back as the 1920's and never concealed it. He was a contributor to Mosley's review, the *British Union Quarterly*. . . . His broadcasts were disgusting. I remember at least one in which he approved the massacre of

* For detailed documentation of this hypothesis, see my book *Metapolitics: From the Romantics to Hitler* (Knopf, 1941).

* Pound's treason trial was suspended on a ruling of insanity, a ruling challenged as incorrect by the psychiatrist Fredric Wertham.

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the East European Jews and 'warned' the American Jews that their turn was coming presently. . . . He *may* be a good writer (I must admit that I personally have always regarded him as an entirely spurious writer), but the opinions that he has tried to disseminate [in] his works are evil. . . ."*

Obviously, Pound has a right to publish anything whatever, with any opinions whatever. But should he also get a prize for it? Perhaps yes, if it were for his distinguished literary career as a whole. Unfortunately, the Bollingen prize was solely for one book: *The Pisan Cantos;* and while poems of aesthetic intention must be judged aesthetically, regardless of their author's politics, Pound's prize-winning poem was not intended as purely aesthetic. Its message politically was that Mussolini was martyred and World War II caused by Jews: "the goyim go to saleable slaughter" for "the yidd," known as "David rex the prime s.o.b." This is politics, not serious poetry, hence not exempt from ethical, as well as aesthetic, condemnation.

Whether from a famous coterie-protected poet, or from a mere "low-brow" Gerald L. K. Smith, such racist propaganda must be protested by those to whom a simple human compassion for Hitler's millions of tortured victims is the deepest emotional and moral experience of our era. What, indeed, is our urgently necessary zeal against Communism but this same heart-breaking distress over inhumanity? To fellow authors who indiscriminately blacken the motives of all critics of the *Pisan Cantos,* we repeat Cromwell's plea, in humility and in sincere good will: "Think it possible that you may be mistaken." Is it anti-poetic and philistine to feel rather violently about the *Pisan Cantos* and other influential neo-fascist revivals when one hears of an ex-Nazi official boasting this year in Frankfort that, when Jewish mothers asked him where their missing two-year-old babies went, he replied: "Up the chimney!"

MESSAGE aside, there is much downright bad writing in the *Pisan Cantos.* William Barrett wisely asked in *Partisan Review:* "How far is it possible, in a lyric poem, for technical embellishments to transform vicious and ugly matter into beautiful poetry?" But really, now, would even the proverbially objective observer from Mars, utterly free from anti-fascist "prejudices," be able to find any "technical embellishments" or "beautiful poetry" in the following lines from the *Pisan Cantos:* "Pétain defended Verdun while Blum was defending a bidet"; "Geneva the usurers' dunghill/Frogs, brits, with a few dutch pimps."

Nevertheless, the bad writing of most of this book is a point I raise only in passing and one I am unwilling, though not unable, to stress. Stressing it would reduce the argument of this article to too easy a plane. If the book (as I believe) is badly written, then even the advocates of art for art's sake would oppose its award. The problem is made more difficult for those who opposed the award—more difficult but also more important and basic—if we temporarily pretend "for the sake of the argument" that it *is* well written and then add: *even in that case* we would oppose the award. Not on political grounds. Poetry must never be judged by politics. But on grounds that our entire civilization, including poetry, depends almost completely on our constantly maintaining a moral heritage which Nazi anti-Semitism would destroy.

Anti-fascist admirers of Pound, writing in honest bewilderment, have asked me personally why Pound's fascism, though admittedly evil, should spoil his poetry for me when the anti-democratic views and alleged "bad politics" of Dante or Shakespeare ob-

* For further background, see essays on Pound, pro and con, in *Partisan Review,* April, May, June 1949, by W. H. Auden, John Berryman, William Barrett, R. G. Davis, Clement Greenberg, Irving Howe, George Orwell, Karl Shapiro, Allen Tate. See R. G. Davis, "Pound: The Poem and the Poet" in the *New Leader,* December 11, 1950; and "The New Criticism and the Democratic Tradition" in *The American Scholar,* Winter 1949-50, with spirited rebuttals by Yvor Winters, Tate, etc., in subsequent issues. For the ablest, most convincing arguments defending the Bollingen award and the *Pisan Cantos,* see the symposium, "The Case Against the Saturday Review of Literature," published by *Poetry* magazine, 1949, and Archibald MacLeish, *Poetry and Opinion,* University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1950.

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viously do not spoil their poetry for me in the slightest. The answer is that Nazi anti-Semitism is not, except ephemerally and superficially, politics at all but a uniquely obscene anti-ethics, a metaphysics of satanism. There is no such metaphysics, no such ethical obscenity basic to Dante or Shakespeare; one may disagree with their monarchism, but this disagreement does not affect the value of their poetry: no basic challenge to civilization is involved in it.

A SEEMINGLY more telling argument on the part of the defenders of the Bollingen prize is to recite the familiar list of the great and admittedly moral authors of the past who happened to dislike Jews. But is it really fair, in defense of Pound and of his award, to cite the anti-Semitism and anti-usury of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*? One contributor to *An Examination of Ezra Pound* does so almost gloatingly, and indeed, the Nazis during the war performed the *Merchant of Venice* with glee. Does this analogy undermine Shakespeare in our regard or bolster Pound? Or is it false and misleading?

Probably false and misleading. Though racial prejudice is never a good thing, the extent to which it is a bad thing varies tremendously according to the age and the moral and social context. Though abstractly just as wrong in Shakespeare's day as now, anti-Semitism was then not in such blunt defiance of the limited information available to that age; nor was it the spearhead of a sinister assault on liberty itself; nor was there a background of sadistic mass murder even remotely approaching Belsen and Ravensbrueck. Today we "know better" (or at least ought to, from the psychological and historical information generally available). It was infinitely more difficult for an Elizabethan to "know better" about anti-Semitism than for Pound. Anti-Semitism in Shakespeare's day was to some extent a norm, even for men of good intentions, while today it represents the very worst and most ill-intentioned forces of our age.

Moreover, Shakespeare gives dignity to, and arouses his readers' sympathy for, the predicament of Shylock. There is a world of difference artistically and also ethically between Shakespeare's letting Shylock express the common humanity of: "I am a Jew. If you prick us, do we not bleed?" and Pound's joking reference to mass murder as "fresh meat on the Russian steppes," the most callous single reference ever written by an American artist.

Pre-Belsen and post-Belsen anti-Semitism, though both unjustified, are qualitatively different; and the former (Shakespeare or Voltaire) cannot be logically compared to the latter (Pound or Céline).* The burning or gassing of five or six million Jews gave, from that point on, an entirely new dimension to anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism after Belsen becomes a uniquely loathsome insult to all Christian ideals, to all human aspirations, to the very core of the dignity of man. This was not the case with the pre-Nazi anti-Semitism of a Shakespeare, a Voltaire, or a Henry Adams. Wrong? Yes. Beyond the pale? Hardly.

Even if, for the sake of the broader issue, we concede the fantastic hypothesis that the *Pisan Cantos* are great poetry, in that case—while respecting such greatness and defending its right of free speech—we must still raise the issue of whether this in addition requires the public honor of an award. Either fascist anti-Semitism is "beyond the bounds of our intellectual life" (to quote the following comment from Irving Howe), or it isn't: "To give Pound a literary prize is, willy-nilly, a moral act within the frame of our social world. To honor him is to regard him as a man with whom one can have decent, normal, even affectionately respectful human and intellectual relations; it means to extend a hand of public fraternity to Ezra Pound. Now a hand to help him when he is down,

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* Here I am oversimplifying for brevity's sake. Naturally, there were pogroms during the Crusades, the Inquisition, and in czarist Russia. But they did not involve, morally and personally, a Shakespeare or a Voltaire, as closely as Belsen does the Axis broadcaster, Pound; and there are further obvious distinctions (such as religious persecution versus racial persecution) making Nazi genocide *sui generis*.

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yes. A hand to defend him from censors, fools and blood-seekers, yes. But a hand of honor and congratulations, no. For Pound, by virtue of his public record and utterances, is beyond the bounds of our intellectual life. If the judges felt that he had written the best poetry of 1948, I think they should have publicly said so—but not awarded any prize for the year."

How is it that no truly elegant avant-garde critic, when praising Pound, deigns to express qualms about: (1) the immoral political message or (2) the unintelligibility of the non-political parts of the poem? This irresponsible qualmlessness about immorality and about unclarity would seem to be the result of two prevalent attitudes, originally liberating but now exerting a despotism of their own. The two attitudes are: first, the triumph of detailed textual criticism for its own sake, scorning the "heresy of paraphrasing" a poem's meaning and ethical content; second, the pushing of T. S. Eliot's plausible statement that modern poetry must be complex into an anxiety neurosis where critics are scared of ever objecting to obscurity lest they sound like middle-brows instead of like Sensitive Plants.

The famous New Criticism's method of analysis tends to treat a poem by itself, like a self-created airtight-sealed object, outside cause and effect. By discarding a poem's *irrelevant* historical, psychological, and "moralizing" encrustations, the "new critics" have splendidly taught us to read the text itself. But by also discarding the *relevant* historical, psychological, and ethical aspects, they are often misreading the text itself.

A reader's response to a poem is a total response, a *Gestalt* in which aesthetic as well as ethical, psychological, and historical factors are inseparably fused together. It is a self-deception to try to separate them and to discover some alchemistical quintessence of isolated "pure" aesthetics, to be judged only by certified "pure" mandarins of criticism. It may be argued that this inextricability of form and content is undesirable; in any case, that it exists is undeniable, with the *Pisan Cantos* only one example among many. This inextricability prompted Paul Valéry's wise warning: "To construct a poem that contains only poetry is impossible. If a piece contains only poetry, it is not constructed; it is not a poem."

So independent an observer as Harry Levin has summarized some of the pros and cons as follows: "Spingarn had called for 'the new criticism' in 1910, without receiving very much response. John Crowe Ransom called again in 1941—and this time spirits came from the vasty deep. It is salutary that criticism, which is bound to admit a good deal of extraneous matter, should thus renew itself for each generation by returning to the direct contemplation of the artistic object. The danger is that the critic who limits his purview too narrowly, is apt to misinterpret the text upon which he dwells. Critics of the new critics, however, have adduced enough specific reminders that interpretation of the present requires acquaintance with the past. . . . We may well be faced, when the situation crystallizes, with a new academicism. The issue will then be whether it is more enlightening, less occult than the old." (Preface to *Perspectives of Criticism.*)

To Archibald MacLeish's splendid statement about poetry ("a poem should not mean but be") must be added the belief that a poem should both mean and be. Only to be, leads to hermetic "new critic" formalism. Only to mean, leads to demagogy, the wrong kind of popularity, and ultimately to the fatal exploitation of literature by Agitprop, which is not really "democratic," as claimed, but either commercial (in America) or totalitarian (in Soviet and fellow-traveler circles).

The current battle of "obscurity" versus "clarity" (or of "to be" versus "to mean") tends to divide poets into two extremes equally deadly to poetry. The first extreme, in the name of anti-philistinism, is for crossword-puzzle poetry which, whatever its fascination, would kill poetry by scaring away its audience. The second extreme, in the name of communication, would demagogi-

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cally popularize poetry, in betrayal of all integrity of standards, until it reaches the widest but also lowest common denominator and is no longer poetry at all, but verse. The first group would sterilize the muse. The second group would prostitute her.

Is there no third possibility for the serious craftsman? Must he become either *précieux* or "corny," either Babbitt Junior or Babbitt Senior?

The answer is: an act of creative faith in a new and third force in poetry, already emerging, equally remote from the muse's mincing sterilizers and back-slapping salesmen. Such a third force must prefer a difficult simplicity to an easy obscurity. It must return to the function of ethical responsibility and of communication of ideas and emotions. Any fool can lucidly communicate an easy greeting-card level of ideas and emotions. Any fool can obscurely "impress" a would-be modernist reader by incoherent and pretentious approximations of difficult ideas and emotions. Great art communicates lucidly and with classic simplicity the most difficult level of ideas and emotions.

It is not easy to say how the new young poets of the mid-century can ever achieve the vitality and originality of the Eliot and Pound movement of three decades ago. But it is easy to say how they can never achieve it: namely, by continuing to imitate Eliot and Pound, whose great virtue—which atones for great harm—is that they were not imitators. "Woe to you," said Goethe, "if you are a grandson!" Pound's and Eliot's ubiquitous "grandsons" have turned the anti-philistinism of their masters into a snobbish new philistinism. Marx said: *"Je ne suis pas Marxiste."* Freud, fortunately, was no Freudian. The time has come for Eliot to ask: "Who will protect me from my protégés?"

These devout grandsons have played Pound a worse trick than anything intended by those of us who cannot enjoy his *Cantos*. They have frozen his dynamic experimental zest, which three decades ago was still doing more good than harm, into a static Alexandrian school. Disarmingly, really endearingly humorless, their school would do no harm even today, were it not for the well-meaning tyranny of its literary Party Line (now beginning to crumble) over college English departments and Little Magazines.

Pound is the keystone of this school of criticism; if he goes out of fashion, then the whole structure becomes shaky; hence, the violence of the attacks on the "philistinism" of critics of the Bollingen prize. These attacks (in some instances, it should be repeated, quite justified) are for the most part motivated not by sympathy with the Master's politics but either by an honorable appreciation of Pound's genius or else by the strategy of sectarian literary patronage systems. Can we distinguish which is which? "For reasons of personal loyalty, which one must respect, and for reasons of sectarian literary loyalty, which one may or may not respect," wrote Karl Shapiro of the Bollingen prize, "few poets anywhere are in a position to say what they really think of Pound's work." In either case, our Allen Tates—to name one brilliant and typical pupil of the Pound-Eliot school—have Alexandrianized and Babbittized this work, *not* into a "fascist" conspiracy, as some *Saturday Review of Literature* writers absurdly implied, but into a supreme bore. They have turned the vital and original revolt of 1913 and the 1920's into a New Academy, today's most baneful block to vitality and originality.

In overcoming this road block, the growing revolt may be rejuvenating poetry as once the Eliot-Pound revolt did in its first exciting dawn. The American poetry of the future, like the classicism of the ancient past, will again see art as a groping search for the good, the true, the beautiful; all three as potentially harmonizing rather than conflicting. What if you seek only the beautiful? Suppose, like so much "new" criticism, you passively ignore the good and the true? Or suppose, like the fascist diabolism of some of Pound's *Cantos*, you actively attack the good and the true? In such cases, you usually find yourself losing the beautiful also. You will find the beautiful only when you seek more than the beautiful.

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ISRAEL GRAPPLES WITH ITS HOUSING CRISIS

The New State's Number One Problem

CHARLES ABRAMS

"MY GOLDEN dream fulfilled would be a small table," an immigrant in an Israeli camp told this writer. "For eight years we have eaten with thousands of others at long tables —four years in a concentration camp, three in a DP camp, now a camp in Israel. My children have never known what a home is."

In that camp alone there were 5,000 victims of Israel's housing problem. In Europe or America the housing problem means overcrowding or slums. To Israel's immigrants, it means homelessness and idling in camps for months; it means sharing a tent with eight others, standing in a long line three times a day for a meal. It means the steady deterioration of ambition and hope on perhaps the most inspiring frontier in the world.

When the writer visited Israel last July there were 90,000 people living in such camps. Two-thirds of them had been there at least four months; one in four was forced to remain seven months or more. About a third of the camp population were children.

Conscious of the waste of manpower, the cost of maintenance, and the growing despair of the inmates, the Israeli government recently initiated a program called hopefully "Operation Homestead." Some of the camps were abandoned and the total population of the others reduced to about 40,000. Yet Operation Homestead has not meant homes for all those who were sent away from the camps. Their tents were simply moved to other sites and set up in smaller groups, or else the newcomers were turned loose by the thousands to fend for themselves in the already overcrowded cities. In the Judean hills, little hutments are being hastily erected next to the tents to shelter the Yemenites from wind and cold. The government knows these hutments are really unfit for human shelter and hopes they can be used later for livestock. In the meantime immigrants continue to pour in, intensifying the already serious shelter problem with each shipload.

The effects of Israel's housing problem are visible everywhere. Existing rooms in the cities teem with people; privacy is the exception; slum conditions are common and spreading; what was originally intended as temporary shelter is now accepted as permanent. Everything with a roof or canvas top is put to use. Though more than 30 per cent of Israel's budget is assigned to new-home building, hardly a token beginning has been made.

IN MAY 1948, when the Israeli population numbered 650,000, there were only 300,000 rooms (excluding kitchens). Since then the population has more than doubled. When Iraq elected to permit her Jews to leave, it meant 80,000 new immigrants in about a single year. Now that Rumania has released

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FOR the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who have poured into Israel since the new state came into being, the Promised Land has too often turned out to be only another crowded "temporary" camp like the crowded "temporary" camps of Europe. How is Israel progressing in the effort to get its new citizens out of the camps and huts and mud-houses in which so many of them are forced to live? Will Israel become a land of slums? What hopes are there for homes for the homeless in "the Jewish homeland"? CHARLES ABRAMS, whose articles on housing problems in the United States have appeared in COMMENTARY, the New York *Post*, and other publications, offers a constructive report on the dimensions of Israel's housing crisis and the plans being made to surmount it. Mr. Abrams is the author of *Revolution in Land* (1939), *The Future of Housing* (1946), and *Race Bias in Housing* (1947). His most recent contribution to COMMENTARY was "Stuyvesant Town's Threat to Our Liberties" in the November 1949 issue.

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her Jews, some 300,000 additional immigrants will eventually have to be housed. The Jews in Hungary and the other countries behind the Iron Curtain, together with those in Egypt and Syria, total hundreds of thousands more. Israel has no lumber, steel, or plumbing, and lacks the currency with which to buy them. She is ineligible for aid under the European Recovery Plan. There has been no time to develop a real mortgage-financing program, to train skilled labor, to plan new communities rationally. If Israel now receives these additional hundreds of thousands of immigrants, as she proposes, how can they be provided with shelter without vast aid from new sources?

Israel would have been facing even greater difficulties but for the mass exodus of Arabs just before and after the recent conflict. Though many of the homes they left were hovels, these did shelter the first 140,000 immigrants. Israel then supplemented this with a housing program that, in relation to her population, shattered all current records elsewhere. At the peak of the 1949 building boom in the United States, for example, the total of new housing units amounted to 2½ per cent of the total number of families. Israel's 28,000 new dwellings in 1949 attained a ratio at least five times as high as that, and her program for 1950-51 is expected to be 12,000 units higher still, in order to accommodate 150,000 persons! Yet these record figures will avail little against the existing backlog and the unceasing influx of immigrants. Nor do they tell the story of the kind of housing being built.

Under the British Mandate, the Jewish Homeland, with few exceptions, followed a policy of orderly development. But planning principles and standards have now had to give way to urgency. Most of the new "permanent" houses look like little corncribs; in space and amenities they constitute slums from the day they are completed. Their only saving feature is the open spaces between them. Some officials insist that many of the immigrants are accustomed to such low standards. But slums once built dominate the pattern of a country for generations. Nor are the effects of slum life confined to the families for whom the slum dwellings are first built.

KFAR IONA *is typical of many similar developments now in process.* Built for 140 families, it is a semi-agricultural settlement with its houses rented to settlers. The land is not crowded as in the cities, but the average house is a hut consisting of a bedroom and "kitchen." The kitchen equipment is a cold-water faucet and a drainboard.

Another type of house, less than 200 square feet in area, is cropping up in the "Eshkol Settlements." These are built by the settlers themselves under the supervision of Levy Eshkol, who is the supervisor of agricultural settlements. Mr. Eshkol hopes they will be expanded later when circumstances permit.

Another program, for Oriental Jews, consists of grim little buildings, each with a single room, kitchen, and shower. Each house covers 300 square feet, less than one-third the British standard and only half the size of America's substandard "Economy House." (This is an "advance" in size over housing previously built, some of which covered only 160 square feet.) The toilet is an outhouse. But the elimination of amenities permits the cost to be held to I£470 ($1,316—the Israeli pound is worth $2.80). Two-bedroom houses costing 20 per cent more are assigned to very large families, but it is not unusual to find families of seven or eight herded into the smaller units. All too many of the "homes" now being built are not places for living but crammed dormitories.

The overcrowded families in Israel look resourcefully for some way to meet their space needs. Sleeping porches, made of old packing cases or cement, are added by the occupants. Someone will attach a rickety shed for his tools. Another will line an outside stairway with old boards to shelter chickens. The absence of interior laundry and storage space is reflected in dozens of big tin laundry basins hanging on nails ham-

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mered into the new apartment walls. The bulging and bustling café life of Tel Aviv, reminiscent of the Continent, is at least partly owing to the absence of living space. With no room for dining or entertaining in a home crowded with beds, the café has become the master living room of Tel Aviv family life; there a whole evening is often spent over a cup of tea.

THE primitive homes dotting Israel's countryside fortunately have not as yet marred her principal cities. The new Jerusalem, with its buildings of sun-baked native stone, its magnificent approach through the hills, and its landscaping, has not been affected. Stone houses, however, are no longer built because of the exodus of Arab craftsmen. Nazareth, though badly crowded, has remained virtually unchanged through the centuries. Haifa's residential quarter on Mount Carmel overlooking the sea, planted with pines and reached by winding roads, is a splendid reminder of a less hectic period. Tel Aviv, however, has simply sprawled farther and farther since its founding in 1909. Originally planned by Sir Patrick Geddes as a perfect small city, the enormous increase in its population (it has doubled since 1936) has transformed it into a chaotic metropolis. The area to the north of Tel Aviv, however, has still been preserved unspoiled and offers hope for a planned expansion, while some newer cities like Ramat Gan bear evidence of good planning and have not yet been affected by the drive for housing-at-any-price.

NOR is all Israel's recent housing substandard. Kiryat Avoda in Holon, for example, composed of one-, two-, and three-story buildings, is an attractive community, with a cooperative factory and a cooperative dispensary and supervised playground. It stands out in pleasant contrast to the long rows of unremittingly uniform apartment houses in the suburbs of Tel Aviv. There is also a community of 356 attached houses being erected in the Tel Aviv district, two stories in height with eight units to a floor, that combines economy with reasonable space standards. These houses sell for I£1125-I£1175 ($3,150-$3,290), but few are available.

The houses built by private builders have generally been of better quality than the current crop, but they are expensive, and the shortage of materials has reduced private operations. Even to rent a new private house requires the payment of a prohibitive amount of key money. Rent control coupled with inflation has sharply cut the value of the older apartment houses for the owners, while, for the tenants, the value of these same apartments has zoomed.

The builder is not to be blamed for high prices, for he pays dearly for labor and materials and never knows what his ultimate costs will be, or whether his job will be halted for want of a few precious nails. Public officials have brought pressure on him to improve his standards and to curtail his ventures in "luxury type" housing. The nature of Israel's luxury housing may be gleaned from an advertisement in the Jerusalem *Post*: "For sale—luxurious villa—3 rooms, etc. . . ."

THERE is a notable tendency in Israel to filter building operations through centralized public-aided corporations. The three main agencies favored are Amidar, Rassco, and Shikun Workman's Housing Corporation. Amidar was recently organized by the Jewish Agency, with 5 million Israeli pounds of public funds, to build housing for immigrants. From May 1949 to April 1950, it built 16,000 houses for sale or rental. Most of its recent output has been the primitive one-room houses with kitchen that were described above. A house costing I£1030 ($2,884) is financed with a I£350 equity payment ($980), a 12-year mortgage of I£500 ($1,400) and an additional short-term loan of I£180 ($504). The rental cost of Amidar houses is from four to five and a half Israeli pounds ($11.20-$15.40) a month. Amidar hoped to float a large loan in America to expand its operations, but separate drives for funds are frowned upon.

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Rassco now operates with a capital of 400,000 Israeli pounds. Rassco, which has erected apartment houses, also builds rural housing. It secures the land and buildings for rural settlers who pay down 50 per cent of the cost. Keren Hayesod gives a mortgage for the balance. A Rassco rural house consists of two rooms, kitchen, and shower, all built on 40 to 52 square meters. Costs are about I£3,000 ($8,400) for an equipped farm, and include a maximum of six acres of farm land.

Shikun is a subsidiary of Histadrut, Israel's politically powerful master-union, which besides controlling Israel's working forces owns a string of materials factories and runs Solel Boneh, Ltd., the biggest building contractor in Israel. Functioning with a capital of I£810,000 contributed jointly by the Jewish Agency and Histadrut, Shikun builds mainly for Histadrut members, new immigrants, and veterans. (Housing is so much in demand that even the political parties have found it expedient to operate building corporations as a means of holding on to their supporters and attracting new ones.) House costs run from I£450 to I£1150 ($1,260-$3,220) and mortgages are 50 per cent of cost for ten to fifteen years, bearing 6½ per cent interest. For the average worker-member who earns 60-70 Israeli pounds a month, the monthly charges will average only 10 per cent of earnings compared to 20 to 25 per cent in other countries, but the down payment is two to five times as high, the standards considerably lower, and the chances of getting a house more remote.

AN INCREASINGLY important factor in building operations is the government itself. Under Dov Givon, a burly, dynamic Israeli, the government program has picked up remarkable speed in view of its economic straitjacket. Givon, who is responsible to Golda Myerson, Minister of Labor and Social Insurance, reports that of 40,000 units planned for 1950-51, 30,000 were already under construction by midsummer.

Givon's most optimistic program is for Beersheba, in the Negev. The approach to the city is through a long stretch of hot, barren land populated only by occasional trains of Bedouin tribesmen. Here a great pipeline is being laid that will transform sand into soil. A city of 9,000 today, it is planned to make Beersheba a city of 100,000, and Givon has already started a huge development of both prefabricated and conventional (handicraft) houses. The prefabrication operation is an elaborate one and by no means tested. A big cannon-shaped vessel is filled with cement and driven over to an immense square mold into which it pours its load; an enormous Tourneaulayer crane then lifts the 70-ton dried form and sets it onto the site. Then the second floor is poured and put into place above the first. About 150 such houses are being built initially, each containing four dwelling units, while 900 ordinary handicraft units are being built nearby.

In its desperate search for a solution, Israel seems to have become a laboratory for experiment with numerous types of prefabricated houses. There are several thousand pre-cut Swedish wood homes, with two adequate bedrooms and toilet, and ample kitchen equipment and interior space, but these cost I£1400 ($3,920) in foreign currency, and another I£1400 to put up. The building superintendents insist it is cheaper to build handicraft homes of similar specifications. There are also Israel's own prefabs, modeled along Swedish lines, but smaller and more austere and with a common toilet for two families. These also require precious lumber and are being curtailed.

ISRAEL could benefit from American know-how and dollar investment, but Jewish builders in America have shown little interest. Hopes were once raised when the Levitts of Long Island, in a sensational front-page story, announced a 25-million-dollar Levittown for Israel. The houses were to be 600 square feet in size (twice that of the current Israeli crop), with standard American kitchen equipment. The Levitts and the Jewish Agency were besieged by people

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ready to buy, many of whom would have put up dollars. But the announced plans proved abortive, and everyone concerned hopes the incident will be forgotten. The Levitts explained that they had needed, and asked for, three and a half million dollars worth of trucks and building machinery, and another nine millions of imported materials, but that Israel could not afford to allocate the dollar commitments. Alfred Levitt told this writer that the idea still has a "nostalgic attraction" for him, and he hopes something can be worked out. Israel has hopes, too, but at this moment they seem distant.

There are a number of experienced private builders like Leopold Schen, formerly of England and now director of Kereth, which built the garden city of Tiv'on near Haifa. But the only large-scale American builder in Israel is, curiously, a non-Jew named William Kretzer, builder of the recently completed million-dollar shoe factory in Jerusalem. A cautious builder with enough cash jobs to keep him busy in the United States, Kretzer found Israel's pioneer spirit so challenging that he has devoted virtually all his time to it. The shoe factory, financed by an American Export-Import Bank loan and the equity investments of two private individuals, Nacham Habas of Israel and Joseph Sugarman of Boston, was completed in a record three months. Kretzer has built several other factories in Israel and is now contemplating a large commercial development financed by Joseph Levy, owner of Crawford Clothes, as well as a factory for the Bulova Watch Company. American architects and engineers design his plants before turning them over to Israeli technicians for local adaptation, and his specifications include native material wherever possible. The know-how Kretzer has brought to Israel in commercial and industrial construction is needed for residential building and materials factories.

A MAJOR bottleneck of Israel's housing program is financing. Efforts to attract foreign insurance companies have not been successful, and there is no mortgage system in the American and European sense. There are no joint savings and building cooperatives like "HSB" in Sweden, which induce savings by offering to build homes for members; flotation of bond issues by local housing authorities is unknown. Except on some publicly aided housing, interest rates run up to 8 per cent or more, mortgages are short-term and are usually written for only 25-50 per cent of cost. The down payments required force cutting of standards and space even on the more expensive homes. Wages for skilled work are high, and since food and clothing are rationed, surplus savings accumulate. Yet savings and loan associations have been slow to grow despite the high interest rates offered. The inflation and the uncertainty surrounding the money situation are to blame, though officials also argue that immigrants are unaccustomed to savings deposits and prefer to put surpluses into tangible goods and land. Free money has helped zoom land prices. Recently, the 10-million-dollar Amun Israeli Housing Corporation was organized by American labor leaders to finance mortgages.

The persistent efforts of Israel's city planning officials to raise planning standards in face of the housing department's insistence on speedy production and reduced costs have also brought their quota of conflicts. Though the talents of competent city planners like Professor Alexander Klein of Haifa are available, the housing shortage has put an emphasis on the building of houses rather than on planned neighborhoods.

The housing and planning departments are under three separate divisions: the Ministry of the Interior, which supervises planning; the Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance, which supervises housing; and the Prime Minister's Office, which is in charge of national planning. Some mayors insist on having charge of the program; the central government thinks the mayors inexperienced; while Histadrut and the political agencies have their own ideas about what planning and standards should be.

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The planning division has sought to induce owners to exchange land needed for houses for other land of equivalent value, but is meeting resistance. It has also insisted upon more open space on private developments, and while under the law 25 per cent of private land must be dedicated for public use, it has sometimes been able to get as much as 40 per cent so set aside. Enforcement of height limitations, however, has proved more difficult. The builders get around the existing restrictions by putting up exposed vertical beams on the ground floor and starting the living quarters on the second story, thereby allowing for future enclosure of the ground floor. The buildings look somewhat bizarre and needlessly compel their occupants to climb an extra flight of stairs.

Another factor baffling the planners is the location of the new developments. Any aesthetic desire of the planners to see most of Israel's new cities spread along the Mediterranean has had to yield to military considerations. Israel's new cities must serve as outposts and garrisons of initial resistance in case of attack from the landward side. With the need to distribute population, housing, and industry over a wide area, plans call for placing 25 per cent of the new houses north and east of Haifa, 22 per cent in Samaria and the Sharon, 10 per cent in the Jerusalem area, 30 per cent in the South, and only 13 per cent in the Tel Aviv and Haifa areas. Thus 65 per cent of the developments are destined for sparsely settled areas. But the housing famine and the general tendency to crowd into cities, where opportunities for work are better, may ultimately defeat these plans. Israel is already one of the most heavily urbanized countries in the world in proportion to her population.

Much as housing experts might exhort this little hard-pressed nation to avoid the errors of older countries, it is difficult to see how she can escape a growing slum problem. The fact is that no nation, large or small, was ever able to prevent the emergence of slums under the pressure of mass movements of people. Just as migration to the cities during the industrial revolution created the slums of urban Europe, and the migration to America produced its bandboxes and dumbbell tenements, so Jewish migration must inevitably crowd Israel's cities and depress the standards of her new neighborhoods below a tolerable minimum. Israel's little huts will perhaps share the fate of America's log cabins and tenements as a temporary feature in the growth of a pioneering nation. But the baffling problem is still how to hold the slums to a minimum, limit their effects, and plan to make more feasible the inevitable and painful second step of slum clearance and redevelopment when the time comes.

With her economic situation what it is, it is hard to see how Israel can possibly cope with her housing needs even on a primitive level without enormous outside capital. Making the problem doubly urgent is the fact that neither fields nor factories can be worked without simultaneously providing shelter for workers. Thus Israel's whole economic development and future depends upon her ability to provide housing. Unless aid is forthcoming, Israel must curtail her immigration—which is an almost impossible decision because so many of the aspiring immigrants are "now or never" cases from the Middle Eastern and Iron Curtain areas.

In the 4-point plan by which Israel seeks a billion and a half dollars to meet her problem, a full 40 per cent is allocated for housing and incidental public improvements. For a substantial part of the total billion which Israel counts on from America, she looks toward grants-in-aid from our government. Certainly she would seem to have a most legitimate claim. The housing of Israel's refugees would seem as much an American—or at least an international—responsibility as the housing of German refugees in the Western zone, for which the United States last year alone appropriated more than 60 million dollars of ERP moneys. What is the rationale by which housing is provided for refugees *to* but not *from* Germany? (Incidentally, some 40 per

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cent of the building in the Allied zone in Germany is being devoted to theaters and luxury housing, some of it costing three times that of ordinary workers' housing.) If the purpose of the American-sponsored housing program is to build up Germany against anti-democratic aggression, is not Israel also an important rampart? These are questions which press for an answer by ERP officials.

Israel's housing program does in fact throw a new light on the whole ERP housing program abroad. If housing funds continue to be disbursed, then an overhauling of the machinery is due, with a separate agency set up to make the necessary loans or grants as well as to finance the production and distribution of materials. The operation should be tackled by experienced housing personnel rather than by men totally unfamiliar with the problem.

Of course the housing situation in Israel cannot wait on the rationalization of the ERP Housing Program. Aid from other existing official sources must be tapped, together with all possible help from philanthropic channels and bond flotations. But the long-term plan should be explored simultaneously. A program properly approached will be more extensive, effective, and cheaper in the long run.

By the same token Israel might well begin to relate her housing and city planning programs to her economic program, so that funds, however raised, will not be dissipated on needlessly costly or needlessly primitive homes. Home building will remain Israel's most important industry for a long time, and it must be organized as such, with the construction of the necessary materials factories, the rational purchase and distribution of materials, the standardization of parts, and the most efficient organization of operations. A ministry of town planning and housing should be set up to overhaul the program and coordinate the now divided activities, as well as relate plans and specifications to national economic requirements. Such specifications should include use of the maximum amount of native materials, with serious efforts made to develop native products such as wall board and cement blocks. It seems a waste to expend currency on costly prefabricated houses when these funds can be more profitably used in the expansion of native factories to produce at least some of the building material locally. Similarly, sums raised in America might go further if used to develop materials factories rather than for buying materials abroad.

If the maximum amount of native material is used for exteriors and flooring, then roofing, plumbing, and hardware could be standardized either in Israel or contracted for abroad to fit the shell. But architectural planning, house building, and city planning should be related to economic planning and not function independently. The aim should be maximum space standards with the minimum of imported materials.

Little has been gained by experimental schemes like the Tourneaulayer operation. Dramatic as it looks, it saves neither time, materials, nor cost. Conventional houses are of better standard, are tested against the elements, while any breakdown in the elaborate Tourneau machinery would more than offset the 10-day time-saving claimed for the operation. So, too, Israel's "expansible housing" program, which entails breaking the walls of existing houses for additions, is open to question. Too often it will be found impractical to expand houses not worth keeping in the first place. The Dutch plan, under which permanent two-family houses can be converted to one-family houses, suggests one alternative. There are others to be explored.

Space standards should be increased where this does not entail a disproportionate increase in the use of imported materials. Provision can be made for the addition of plumbing and other facilities in future years, but lack of space is the most difficult problem to correct later on.

A few additional amenities might be supplied without imperiling the economic program. Built-in closets of native materials can be provided, for example, if they there-

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by dispense with the need to buy a closet of imported lumber for each family. And if occupants are to provide their own sheds, porches, chicken coops, and other "improvements," this will require wood and other scarce materials in any case, so these might as well be included in the original plan and at less cost in the long run.

Better planning of neighborhoods can be achieved by providing for playgrounds and open play spaces. Monotony can and should be avoided. The development of building-and-loan cooperatives should be encouraged, and they should do building as well as lending. While private operations may have to be cut during emergencies, they should not be regulated out of existence or subordinated to the bigger public corporations. The building and contracting fields should be kept competitive.

To avoid delays and interruptions due to shortages of materials, no development should be begun until all the materials necessary for it are on hand or available. The many houses throughout Israel standing unfinished for lack of roofs impress one as a sad waste of effort, time, and money. Training should be given construction workers before they are assigned to a site, and Histadrut's limited apprentice system should be expanded and a vocational training program launched in earnest so that a greater number of electricians, plumbers, masons, and other skilled craftsmen become available. Increase of housing supply should take precedence over the effort to keep wages at peak levels. Excessive cartage costs paid to the transport companies should be reduced to reasonable levels. In a situation as critical as Israel's, institutional loyalties, however understandable, must give way to the larger interest.

All these difficulties may, of course, be overcome if the major problem of capital shortage is solved, but the program should be planned now, not left to chance. On whether Israel raises the needed funds depends her survival. On how she uses these funds depends her way of life.

MEMORIAL HOUR

BABETTE DEUTSCH

For all its busy joy, the hill,
Where now noon sits in stillness, grows
A living monument to leisure.
Here something less than animal
Yet more than human seems to take
Its pleasure. Earth and heaven know
There are no angels in that sky,
But wings from old nativities
At home in azure float and foam.
Below, among rough grass and clover,
Strewn tinily, like tropic fish
Hued henna, saffron, yellow, blue,
And shrunk to pinhead size, lie stars.
This hour I would give to you
Who have no longer any part
In earth or air, whose heart was set
On nature's intimate distances.
As they were yours, to us you are,
Who are sealed ashes in an urn.
I shall not try to speak to them,
To me they cannot ever speak.
Yet here's your hour. You seem less far,
Gone, though, beyond return.

BABETTE DEUTSCH has published several volumes of poetry and has also written novels, juvenile books, and criticism.

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THE BILL

A Story

BERNARD MALAMUD

THOUGH the street was somewhere near a river, it was landlocked and narrow, a crooked canyon of aged brick tenement buildings. A child throwing a ball straight up saw a bit of pallid sky. On the corner, opposite the blackened tenement where Willy Schlegel worked as janitor, stood another like it except that this included the only store in the street—going down five stone steps into the basement, a small, dark delicatessen owned by Mr. and Mrs. F. Panessa, really a hole in the wall.

They had just bought it with the last of their money, Mrs. Panessa told the janitor's wife, so as not to have to depend on either of their daughters, both of whom, Mrs. Schlegel understood, were married to selfish men who had badly affected their characters. To be completely independent of them, Panessa, a retired factory worker, withdrew his three thousands of savings and bought this little delicatessen store. When Mrs. Schlegel, looking around—though she knew the delicatessen quite well from the many years she and Willy had been janitors across the way—when she asked, "Why did you buy this one?" Mrs. Panessa cheerfully replied because it was a small place and they would not have to overwork; Panessa was sixty-five. They were not here to coin money but to support themselves without having to work to death. After talking it over many nights and days, they had decided that the store would at least give them a living. She gazed into Etta Schlegel's gaunt eyes and Etta said she hoped so.

She told Willy about the new people across the street who had bought out the Jew, and said to buy there if there was a chance; she meant by that they would continue to shop at the self-service but when there was some odd or end to pick up, or something they had forgotten, they could go to Panessa's. Willy did as he was told. He was tall and broad-backed, with a heavy face seamed dark from the coal and ashes he shoveled around all winter, and his hair often looked gray from the dust the wind whirled up at him out of the ash cans when he was lining them up for the sanitation truck. Always in overalls—he complained he never stopped working—he would drift across the street and down the steps when something was needed, and lighting his pipe, would stand around talking to Mrs. Panessa as her husband, a small bent man with a fitful smile, stood behind the counter waiting for the janitor after a long interval of talk to ask upon reflection for a dime's worth of this or that, the whole business never amounting to more than half a dollar. Then one day Willy got to talking about how the tenants goaded him all the time and what the cruel and stingy landlord could think up for him to do in that smelly five-floor dungeon. He was absorbed by what he was saying and before he knew it had run up a three-dollar order, though all he had on him was fifty cents. Willy looked like a dog that had just had a licking but Mr. Panessa, after clearing his throat, chirped up it didn't matter, he could pay the rest whenever he wanted. He explained that everything was run on credit, business and everything else, because after all what was credit but the fact that people were

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BERNARD MALAMUD's short story "The Prison," published in our September issue, has been selected for inclusion in Martha Foley's forthcoming volume of the best short stories of the year. Mr. Malamud has published stories in *Partisan Review, Harper's Bazaar,* and elsewhere. He was born in Brooklyn in 1914 and attended the College of the City of New York and Columbia University. He is now at work on a novel.

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human beings, and if you were really a human being you gave credit to somebody else. That surprised Willy because he had never heard a storekeeper say it before. After a couple of days he paid the two fifty, but when Panessa said he could trust whenever he wanted, Willy sucked a flame into his pipe, then began to order all sorts of things.

When he brought home two bagfuls of stuff, Etta shouted he must be crazy. Willy answered he had charged everything and didn't have to pay.

"But we have to pay some time, don't we," Etta shouted. "And we have to pay higher prices than in the self-service." She said then what she had said every day of her married life, "We're poor people, Willy. We can't afford too much."

Though Willy saw the justice of her remarks, despite her scolding he still went across the street and trusted. Once he had a crumpled ten-dollar bill in his pants pocket and the amount came to less than four but he didn't offer to pay and let Panessa write it in the book. Etta knew he had the money so she screamed when he admitted he had bought on credit.

"Why are you doing it for? Why don't you pay if you have the money?"

He did not answer but after a time he said there were other things he had to buy once in a while. He went into the furnace room and came out with a wrapped package which he opened, and it contained a beaded black dress.

Etta cried over the dress and said she would never wear it because the only time he ever brought her anything was when he had done something wrong. Thereafter she let him do all the grocery shopping and did not speak when he bought on trust.

Willy continued to buy at Panessa's. It seemed they were always waiting for him to come, up from the basement (they lived in three tiny rooms in the floor above the store), across the street and down into the delicatessen, looming large as he opened the door. Every time he bought, it was never less than two dollars worth and sometimes it was as high as five. Mrs. Panessa would pack everything into a deep double bag, after Panessa had called off each item and written the price with a smeary black pencil into his looseleaf notebook. Whenever Willy came in, Panessa would open that book, wet his finger tip and flip through a number of blank pages till he came to Willy's account in the center of the book. After the order was packed and tied up, Panessa added the amount, touching each figure with his pencil, hissing to himself as he added, and Mrs. Panessa's bird eyes would follow the figuring until Panessa wrote down a sum and then added that sum to the previous total sum, and the new total sum (after Panessa had glanced up at Willy and saw that Willy was looking) was twice underlined and then Panessa shut the book. Willy, with his unlit pipe loose in his mouth, did not move until the book was put away under the counter; then he roused himself and embracing the bundle—with which they offered to help him across the street though he always refused—plunged out of the store.

One day when the sum total came to eighty-three dollars and several cents, Panessa, lifting his head and smiling, asked Willy when he could pay something on account. The very next day Willy stopped buying at Panessa's and after that Etta, with her cord market bag, began to shop again at the self-service and neither of them went across the street for as much as a pound of prunes or a small can of sardines they had meant to buy but had forgotten.

Etta, when she returned from shopping at the self-service, scraped the wall on her side of the street to get as far away as possible from Panessa's.

Later she asked Willy if he had paid them anything.

He said no.

"When will you?"

He said he didn't know.

A month went by, then Etta met Mrs. Panessa around the corner, and though Mrs. Panessa said nothing about the bill, Etta came home and reminded Willy.

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"Leave me alone," he said, "I got enough trouble of my own."

"What kind of trouble have you got, Willy?"

"The goddam tenants and the goddam landlord," he shouted and slammed the door.

When he returned he said, "What have I got that I can pay? Ain't I been a poor man every day of my life?"

She was sitting at the table and lowered her arms and put her head down and wept.

"With what?" he shouted, his face lit up dark and webbed. "With the meat off of my bones?

"With the ashes in my eyes. With the piss I mop up on the floors. With the cold in my lungs when I sleep."

He felt for Panessa and his wife a grating hatred and vowed never to pay because he hated them so much, especially the humpback behind the counter. If he ever smiled at him again with those eyes he would lift him off the floor and crack his bent bones.

That night he went out and got drunk and lay till morning in the gutter. When he returned with filthy clothes and bloody eyes, Etta held up to him the picture of their four-year-old son who had died from diphtheria, and Willy, weeping splashy tears, swore he would never touch another drop.

Each morning he went out to line up the ash cans he never looked the full way across the street.

"Give credit," he mimicked, "give credit."

HARD times set in. The landlord ordered cut down on heat, cut down on hot water. He cut down on Willy's expense money and wages. The tenants were angered. All day they pestered Willy like flies and he told them what the landlord had ordered. Then they cursed Willy and Willy cursed them. They telephoned the Board of Health but when the inspectors arrived they said the temperatures were within the legal minimum though the house was drafty. However, the tenants still complained they were cold and goaded Willy about it all day but he said he was cold too. He said he was freezing but no one believed him.

One day he looked up from lining up two ash cans for the truck to remove and saw Mr. and Mrs. Panessa staring at him from the store. They were staring up, both together, through the glass front door and when he looked at them at first his eyes blurred and they appeared to be two scrawny, loose-feathered birds.

He went down the block to get something from another janitor and when he got back they then reminded him of two skinny leafless bushes, sprouting up through the wooden floor. He could see through the bushes to the empty shelves.

In the spring, when the grass shoots were sticking through the cracks in the sidewalk, he told Etta, "I'm only waiting till I can pay it all."

"How, Willy?"

"We can save up."

"How?"

"How much do we save a month?"

"Nothing."

"How much have you got hid away?"

"Nothing any more."

"I'll pay them bit by bit. I will by Jesus."

The trouble was there was no place they could get the money. Sometimes when he was trying to think of the different ways there were to get money his thoughts ran ahead and he saw what it would be like when he paid. He would wrap the wad of bills with a thick rubber band and then go up the stairs and cross the street and go down the five steps into the store. He would say to Panessa, "Here it is, little old man, and I bet you didn't think I would do it, and I don't suppose nobody else did and sometimes me myself but here it is in bucks all held together by a broad rubber band." And after hefting the wad a little, he placed it, like making a move on a checkerboard, squarely in the center of the counter, and the diminutive man and his wife both unpeeled it, squeaking and squealing over each blackened buck and marveling that so many ones had been tied together into such a small pack.

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Such was the dream Willy dreamed but he could never make it come true.

He worked hard to. He got up early and scrubbed the stairs from cellar to roof with soap and a hard brush then went over that with a wet mop. He cleaned the woodwork too and oiled the bannister till it shone the whole zigzag way down and rubbed the mailboxes in the vestibule with metal polish and a soft rag until you could see your face in them. He saw his own heavy face with a surprising yellow mustache he had recently grown and the tan felt cap he wore that a tenant had left behind in a closetful of junk when he had moved. Etta helped him and they cleaned the whole cellar and the dark courtyard under the crisscrossed clotheslines and they were quick to respond to any kind of request, even from tenants they didn't like, for toilet repairs. Both worked themselves to exhaustion every day, but as they knew from the beginning, no extra money came in.

ONE morning when Willy was shining up the mailboxes, he found in his own a letter for him. Removing his cap, he opened the envelope and held the paper to the light as he read the trembling writing. It was from Mrs. Panessa who wrote her husband was ill across the street and she had no money in the house so could he pay her just ten dollars and the rest would wait for later.

He tore the letter into bits and hid all day in the cellar. That night, Etta, who had been searching for him in the streets, found him behind the furnace amid the pipes and she asked him what he was doing there.

He explained about the letter.

"Hiding won't do any good at all," she said hopelessly.

"What should I do then?"

"Go to sleep, I guess."

He went to sleep but the next morning burst out of his covers, pulled on his overalls and ran out of the house with an overcoat flung over his shoulders. Around the corner he found a pawnshop, where he got ten dollars for the coat and was gleeful.

But when he got back there was a hearse or something across the street and two men in black were carrying this small and narrow pine box out of the house.

"Who's dead, a child?" he asked one of the tenants.

"No, a man named Mr. Panessa."

Willy couldn't speak. His throat had turned to bone.

After the pine box was squeezed through the vestibule doors, Mrs. Panessa, grieved all over, tottered out alone. Willy turned his head away although he felt she wouldn't recognize him because of his new mustache and tan cap.

"What'd he die of?" he whispered to the tenant.

"I really don't know."

But Mrs. Panessa, walking behind the box, had heard.

"Old age," she shrilly called back.

He tried to say some sweet thing but his tongue hung in his mouth like dead fruit on a tree and his heart was a black-painted windowpane.

Mrs. Panessa moved away to live first with one stone-faced daughter, then with the other. And the bill was never paid. Never.

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KEEP COOL, MAN

The Negro Rejection of Jazz

ANATOLE BROYARD

"GET HOT" was once the Negro reveler's favorite exhortation; now, in Harlem, the key word is "Be *cool*, man." The difference between these two expressions is more than a mere matter of slang: implied in them are two distinct and contrasting attitudes toward experience.

"Get hot" was the jubilant cry of the emancipated Negro finally celebrating his recently acquired freedom. Released from bondage, he exercised his new liberty in the most immediate forms: he danced, sang, and demonstrated, played *hot jazz* and seared his insides with gin. Getting hot was a group ritual, a spontaneous, unself-conscious tribal activity having little to do with white society. It was a release, a letting off of steam after hundreds of years of suppression; also, it counteracted persisting contemporary pressures. The Negro enjoyed getting hot, and, after burning himself out in dance, drink, and music, he always rose phoenix-like from his ashes, re-created through recreation.

Hot jazz and the accompanying popular culture finally caught the attention, then the admiration, of certain sectors of white society. In small numbers they trickled into Harlem cafés and, under their influence, "hot" culture was slightly altered. The solidarity of the Negro group was penetrated; the whites brought with them their own standards of comparison, making the Negro something of a performer. Feeling himself observed, the Negro grew somewhat self-conscious and the jazz minstrel was born. Gradually, the growing popularity of hot jazz competed with the in-group or tribal feeling, and jazz became simultaneously a tribal and an open phenomenon. In the transition, it lost some of its ritual effectiveness, at least among those who performed it for mixed society. In exclusively Negro society, however, it still retained its immediate significance.

BY THE 30's, hot jazz was variously called *jump* or *swing* music. The connotations of these new terms are obscure but not uninterpretable in a general sense. *Hot* had derived somehow from the notion of Negro history: the tribal dance around the fire, the hot countries, the "hot-bloodedness" of the Negro reveler in his primitive stage. *Jazz* was an onomatopoetic, exclamatory word, a primitive coinage, having no previous or extensible significance. *Jump* and *swing* were more self-conscious American locutions, sophisticated slang rather than patois. And they also implied a certain detachment and mechanicalness: the artificial *élan* and acrobatic quality of jump and the monotonously patterned regularity connoted in swing subtly veered away from the spontaneous and improvisatory feeling of hot jazz.

In this period, Negro popular culture began to incorporate into its body proper certain elements of white society, drawn for the most part from the less favored ethnic and economic groups. These were not actually minorities in the sense that Negroes and Jews are; they might be called psychological

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ANATOLE BROYARD, anatomist of the Negro personality in a white world, here lays open the deeper meaning of the injunction to "Be cool, man" now current in Harlem music-making. Gone, he says, is the first fine exuberance of the "Get hot" jazz era. That music, and its underlying attitude, passed into the sophisticated black-and-white swing and bebop, then, in the writer's view, closed on the present "coolness" in a dead circle of unrealized hopes and disappointment—the newest phase of the "rejection" which Mr. Broyard described in a previous COMMENTARY article (July 1950). Mr. Broyard was born in New Orleans in 1920, and now teaches in the Division of General Education, New York University.

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minorities, or fellow-travelers of the Negro minority. Their incorporation as spectator, participant, and devotee served to further split the consciousness of Negro popular culture. The Negro became increasingly aware of his role as creator and performer. He, himself, however, was still the subject matter of his performance. His music—in lyrics and feeling—remained autobiographical and continued to express his reactions to his situation.

But this increasing responsiveness to white audiences soon succeeded in changing the Negro musician's attitude, as well as that of his followers. His subject matter became more and more a matter of convention and of less and less significance as an expression of his situation. The Negro musician was uprooted as a folk or tribal artist and transplanted as a professional entertainer into white society. This eventually alienated him from the sources of his experience in Negro culture and forced him to seek new sources outside it. *Bebop*, which began in the mid-40's, was the expression of the Negro's search for new material in this period. It was the improvised interpretation of experience of the Negro musician as immigrant in white society. Because he was a foreigner, it was a kind of gibberish.

Lost between two cultures, the transplanted Negro began to search for a vocabulary and a new syntax. He dropped jazz, jump, and swing and experimented in bebop with the more complex semantics of the larger world. In so doing, he developed appropriate habits. For his new situation, he selected more fitting aids to inspiration: "tea" (marihuana), which had been an occasional stimulus, became more and more a part of his creative method, a permanent condition of his new world. "Lush," or whisky, was no longer suitable. It had had a Dionysian, cathartic effect, and this no longer applied to the Negro performer's situation; he was no longer engaged in passionately celebrating his freedom and drowning out his troubles; he was momentarily in the independent position of a detached creator. Consequently, he sought the relatively detached imaginal stimulus of "tea." He moved from kinesthesis into dissociated consciousness—dissociated to enable him to create independent relationships, uncoerced by his conditioning. In short, he emancipated his memory.

By this time, Negro popular culture had a large and coherent body of supporters, Negro and white, who adopted and articulated attitudes to accompany or interpret the music of their favorite performers. This was the era of the *hipster*,* the first articulate philosopher of Negro and Negro-inspired popular culture. Starting as an adept in popular culture, the hipster finally arrogated to himself a *soi-disant* connoisseurship in all the forms of fine discrimination included in the scope of his awareness. His argot and attitudes concretized the unconscious or ineffable evolutions of the musicians. His echoing and vulgarization of the musicians' productions also had the effect of accelerating changes. These changes were more urgently required, too, by the Negro's new situation: no longer really rooted in his own —or any—culture, he ceaselessly searched in his music, which was his most important formulation of relationships, for a viable one.

When he failed to find it, his efforts took on a different character. "Tea," which had been his stimulus, his muse, became his alternative, his escape. The music he sent out in search of meaning first cavorted in technical virtuosity, then came emptily back to its source. The sally became less and less adventurous, more and more rhetorical. Soon the music was deployed in the expectation that it would find nothing, only to return; and here a dead-end aesthetic was born. A new, circular music, based on a vicious circle, grew out of the situation. Pointing up the appropriation and silencing of the Negro performer's situation and personality, this new music, the end product of the evolution of Negro music, was formulated by a white pianist, Lennie Tristano. When it finally came to be described as *cool* music, the denial

*See the author's "Portrait of the Hipster," *Partisan Review*, June 1948.

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of the Negro's condition and personal history was complete.

The circular quality of cool music is unmistakable. The orchestrations and the solos turn back on themselves as a result of the "cool" musician's lack of interest in the autobiographical continuities which served as the program, mood, or configurations of jazz, jump, or swing. The circle is the most self-contained form in nature, and thus, in cool music, nothing obtrudes, the effect is zero. The supporters of this music might argue that all music—i.e. "classical," "serious," non-folk music—is tautological or equal only to itself, but their own habit of interpreting cool music and describing the musicians' attitudes in psychological terms would contradict this. In other words, this zero is an attitudinal, not an aesthetic effect. It is the cool man's answer to the difficult algebraic problems of the marginal man's place in society.

THE advent of cool music is of little importance compared to the implications of the "cool" philosophy adopted by countless followers of Negro and Negro-derived popular culture. Many of these followers are of course Negroes and, with them as disseminators, the cool attitude has spread like a crop-killing frost through Harlem. Its consequences have a direct bearing on the whole "Negro problem." In the jazz attitude, the Harlem Negro considered himself his own problem; collectively speaking, he thought little about modifying his relations to white society or changing the internal structure of his situation. He retained a tribal identity which he ritualized in a Dionysian fashion. In the jump, swing, and, finally, bop stages, he was performing an increasingly miscegenated ritual which was gradually losing its original identity and cathartic quality. With coolness, he comes to a standstill in his observance of his position in the world; in effect, he ignores it.* This tendency to ignore it is the result of many overlapping and ambivalent developments, some of which we can only guess at. Among them we can probably list:

a) A cooling of the Negro performer's ardor in the desire for further freedom and a more secure social status, a complacency induced by his partial emancipation and by the adulation of his following;

b) A general sophistication and adulteration of the Negro's passion for improving his situation, deriving from his assimilation of white attitudes and a partial identification with whites;

c) A feeling of ennui, the consequence of his way of life and his uprootedness, which have separated him from the sources of his aspirations;

d) An unconscious, cumulative social resentment, exacerbated by his abandonment of the catharsis of hot jazz. Repeatedly rejected in subtle forms by white society at large, and disappointed in his growing expectations of reward as a virtuoso, the Negro reacted against the parent society with passivity, a classic attitude of anticipated disappointment.

Coolness is a congealing of the Negro's unrealizable wishes. His contact with white society has opened new vistas, new ideals in his imagination, and these he defends by repression, freezing up against the desire to be white, to have normal social intercourse with whites, to behave like them. Coolness is in part his attempt to move from the performer to the omniscient and superior spectator—the spectator looking upon himself. He wants to be not *frantic*—the attitude he has so conclusively rejected—but self-possessed, composed, nonchalant, noncommittal, the picture of a man without a care in the world, anything but hot under the collar. He aspires to the Anglo-Saxon ideal of reserve; he has always used "English" as a term of admiration, implying subtlety, *savoir-faire, sang-froid,* inborn status, etc.

And if all this were true, if the Negro suddenly became as cool-headed as his new attitude presupposes, it might be beneficial, provided he then turned his detached intelligence toward the problem of finding his

*See the author's "Portrait of the Inauthentic Negro," COMMENTARY, July 1950. Its discussions of the "rejected attitude" and role inversion are particularly relevant to "coolness."

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real place in society. But in coolness he evades the issue; he withdraws his head, turtle-wise, into a catatonic crouch of sophistication; he rolls himself up into a hermetic ball; he becomes a pacifist in the struggle between social groups—not a conscientious objector, but a draft-dodger.

THE hot jazz enthusiast was his own phenomenon; the hipster of jump, swing, and bop set himself up as a connoisseur of all phenomena; for the cool man there are no phenomena. The jazz performer and his followers drank whisky or gin to increase their phenomenal intensity; the hipster used "tea" to multiply imaginal possibilities; the cool man resorts to heroin—the concentrated image of his attitude—to insulate his nerve ends, to isolate himself in a drugged stasis. With the use of heroin, he turns, in a sense, toward the yogism described by Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents:* "The gratification of our instincts is happiness, but when the outer world lets us starve, refuses us satisfaction of our needs, they become the cause of very great suffering. So the hope is born that by influencing these impulses one may escape some measure of suffering. This type of defense against pain no longer relates to the sensory apparatus; it seeks to control the internal sources of our needs themselves. An extreme form of it consists in annihilation of the instincts, as taught by the wisdom of the East and practiced by the yogi. When it succeeds, it is true, it involves giving up all other activities as well (sacrificing the whole of life), and again, by another path, the only happiness it brings us is that of peace."

But there are important differences between coolness and yogism. To begin with, coolness doesn't bring peace, but anesthesia, hypnotizing the mind with music that weaves circles before it, with fantasied attitudes, or with chemical depressants. Peace is partly a positive triumph, emphatically different from the temporary absence of irritation. Peace implies a working through to spiritual contentment. In another passage, Freud entertains the possibility that "the yogis, by their practices of withdrawal from the world, concentrating attention on bodily functions, peculiar methods of breathing, actually are able to produce new sensations and diffused feelings in themselves . . ." which may be related to "a physiological foundation, so to speak, of much of the wisdom of mysticism." The cool man has none of this; actually he has nothing. He is like a man who waits for death, who already reproduces its conditions, who has already died in spirit, denying his impulses in anticipation of their eventual decease. This is an attitude peculiarly characteristic of America, where time—the measure of man's existence—is habitually "killed," and where the repression or trivialization of death deprives it of its function as a contrast to life and therefore an intensification of it. For the cool man, hell has frozen over, and his is the coldness of a corpse.

The cool Negro is a case of social gangrene caused by frozen members. He has put his situation on ice; ostensibly, he does not wish to melt into American society. The Negro fiddles while Rome burns. But as we watch him we see the rub: in his withdrawn abstraction, the cool Negro suggests the *stunned* Negro of slavery. The irony is that coolness is a self-enslavement.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

COLLECTION LAWYER

A Portrait

ELLA MAE LINSLEY

LET us call the client, harassed by certain department and fish store bills, X., for of course it is myself. Who else? The scene is an old-fashioned office building in Pemberton Square, Boston.

The building has a marble entrance hall with two gilt elevators you have to ring and ring for, since they huddle down at the bottom of the shaft, in the warmth, while their aging operators doze. As I waited, I remembered I had been here twenty years before, calling on a kind, white-mustached, portly cousin, a court stenographer, whose office was stacked with neat notebooks of immaculate Pitman shorthand: I believe he used a mechanical pencil known as a stylo. The woman waiting with me for the elevator might have been his very amanuensis—a maiden stenographer in her fifties, in a serge dress with a lace collar, with rats under, and a net over, her grizzled hair.

At last the elevator came, and I got off at the fourth floor and entered the offices of George Ginzberg, not knowing at all what to expect, feeling more than ever harassed, and indigent. Also I had a head cold and had not brought enough handkerchiefs. I recalled to myself that I was here because another lawyer I had consulted had said that was the best thing to do, barring paying the bills, of course. "I didn't know George Ginzberg handled these accounts," he said, in surprise. "He's a very fine man. I'd go to see him if I were you."

I entered what could have been my kind elderly cousin's offices, twenty years ago—a Boston office of the old school. There was a linoleum-floored reception hall, unoccupied, with an office at either side. The secretary wasn't there right then—at ten o'clock she had stepped out for a moment, perhaps was out for coffee. One office also was empty, so I entered the other, and met George Ginzberg.

He was a small, rather shabby, rather dusty-looking, gray-haired man, in a tired tweed jacket, and half-moon glasses. His desk was littered and dusty, and beside it, on a dusty table, was an outmoded radio, and a tall, ancient telephone. The room was lined with filing cabinets, with papers and folders of all kinds piled on top of them in dusty disorder. In back of Mr. Ginzberg, through the large, dingy window, filtered the perfect view for the occasion—an overcast day, the back of the courthouse, and pigeons.

"Yes?" said Mr. Ginzberg, and when I told him my name, he nodded, sighed, pulled out two folders that referred to my particular troubles, and put his chin on his hands, and his elbows on the desk before him.

I BEGAN, in a rapid mutter, to explain the situation. My husband was an associate professor, at one of the Harvard graduate schools. Several years before, our outstanding

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FEW people can hope to go through life without getting too deeply into debt; when our time comes, we too may be fortunate enough to confront a collection lawyer like Mr. Ginzberg—for, as some of us can already testify from personal experience, there are apparently enough Mr. Ginzbergs around to make him a recognizable type. The author of this sketch has concealed her identity under a pseudonym: one cannot be too careful with one's credit rating.

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bills could have been met out of current income, but my husband had voluntarily cut that income by nearly two-thirds, in order to do some very special and important work. Even so, we had thought we could pay our bills, and had, indeed, made a few, erratic payments here and there. Mr. Ginzberg opened the files and looked at the record, sighing again. I explained, our income soon was due to increase materially, if we could just prevent legal actions taking place for a month or two—

"When we have money, we pay our bills," I said.

Mr. Ginzberg said, "You don't have to tell me all this. What do you want?"

Delay, I said. This document — I took it out and handed it over. "Isn't there anything I can do? If I had the money I'd pay the bill, naturally—but I can't. But isn't there anything I can do?"

Mr. Ginzberg made an involuntary movement. "Don't ask *me!*" he said. "Please!"

"That's right," I said, confused by the aura of peaceful legal apathy. "I forgot. You're the lawyer for the other side, aren't you?"

"What is your husband's name?" Mr. Ginzberg asked, and I told him, and mentioned a few of his connections and prospects, to give us substance in Mr. Ginzberg's eyes. He smoothed the legal document he had caused to be sent to me.

"*Why* didn't you come to see me before?" he asked, and I was ashamed, thinking of the series of postcards and letters I had ignored, feeling if it came from a lawyer it was bad news, and it could wait. Mr. Ginzberg looked at me over his low glasses. "We never press *our* people, if they're in professions," he said. "We understand. We know they need time, time—we try to protect them—"

I said eagerly, of course we planned to pay, and in a month or two—

Mr. Ginzberg turned, so that I saw his small, elderly profile against the rain-stained glass of the window. He put his fingers together, tip to tip, and swayed back in his swivel chair. He looked out at the pigeons.

"I don't know. Maybe I should have been more of a financial success myself," he said, in a low voice.

The phone rang. The secretary was still out, so Mr. Ginzberg answered it himself, tilting the tall phone forward, and telling some woman in Revere not to worry. "Didn't I tell you everything would be all right?" he asked, and hung up.

I had meanwhile decided to go on talking and to be perfectly frank, because obviously Mr. Ginzberg was still troubled about one of his own, and the legal document still lay before him. I saw him going home at night, with a green baize bag, and a small felt hat, furled evenly all around the brim, taking others' troubles with him. I gave him a shabby, biggish house in Chestnut Hill or Brookline—mansard roof, brown or gray paint, thick vines darkening the porch.

He turned back to me. "Professional people," he said.

I didn't like his disappointment that we didn't do better with ourselves and our opportunities, explained that my husband was improving his status, and, besides, I added, "Sometimes I make money, too, and when I do, I pay bills. Last fall—"

Mr. Ginzberg held up his hand. "You needn't tell me all this," he said.

"But I want to," I said. "We work hard, we're reputable people—"

"What do you do?" Mr. Ginzberg asked.

"Write," I said. "Sometimes I sell stories."

Mr. Ginzberg leaned forward, pressing his hands down on the desk. "Do you write good stories?"

"I guess so, sometimes," I said. "Anyway, sometimes I sell them, and when I do—"

The secretary had come in, by no means my cousin's transcriber of faultless Pitman. She was a big, handsome blonde Jewish girl. I felt at once she despised, and protected, her elderly employer. He, in his turn, thought nothing much of her. She might be a cousin, getting experience to cite later.

MR. GINZBERG had turned away from me again, was looking out at the pigeons.

In a very low voice he said, "Maybe I should have gone in for something like that. I've always had an interest—I didn't know—"

He turned back, and bent over to take something from the deep bottom drawer of his ancient desk, the drawer in which one keeps the towel, the sandwich, the personal belongings. He sat up, holding in each hand a worn volume of *Best American Short Stories.*

"You know these?" he asked me, carefully.

"Yes," I said, still worried. "I've had a couple of stories in them."

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There was a brief silence. Mr. Ginzberg nodded, and put the books out of sight. He turned back to me.

"Do you know," he said, "I have a very considerable library? Fifteen hundred volumes! Very valuable."

I said, "You must read a great deal."

"I do," he said. "I've always had an interest. Ethel!"

The secretary didn't answer.

"We have an answer form here, don't we?" Mr. Ginzberg said.

"No," said Ethel.

"Is that what I'm supposed to get from the clerk of the court, and file?" I said. "I think someone said—"

"Ethel, find me an answer form. You know where they are," Mr. Ginzberg said.

"You have children?" he asked, while she opened and closed drawers of files. I said yes, and he nodded, in a somber way.

"You are fortunate," he said.

"I think so," I said.

"Find that form, Ethel," he said.

"She should get it from the court," Ethel protested. I could tell this was all out of order, and belatedly I remembered I had not come here for legal counsel and comfort, but to face the lawyer for the enemy, the opponent, the—I remembered the word now—creditor. "They'll type it out for her."

"Sit down and type," said Mr. Ginzberg, and rapidly dictated the deathless words the defendant answers in municipal court: "Now comes the defendant in the above entitled action and for answer denies each and every allegation, item and particular. . . ."

I stirred uneasily. "That's not true," I said. "I never said I didn't owe the money. I do."

Mr. Ginzberg held up his small, well-kept, elderly hand. He went on dictating rapidly, and Ethel typed. "And further answering, the defendant says that if she ever owed the plaintiff anything, the same has been paid in full. . . ."

I must have looked scandalized as Ethel came over with the narrow slip of cardboard. Mr. Ginzberg looked at me, with pity and understanding, and a faint gleam of a smile, the first I had seen on his face during all the interview.

"Mail it Saturday," he said, and rapidly explained that it would delay action. "And, as I see it, what you need is time, time," he said, touching the folders.

I hesitated, taking the slip from Ethel. "It makes me uneasy," I said. "It isn't true."

Mr. Ginzberg very nearly pleaded with me, and Ethel could have slapped him and me. "Please!" he said. "It's not a lie. You're not swearing to anything. Please! This is the legal form you should mail in, I assure you—I know. If I give it to you—and Ethel—" he turned to her sharply, "You understand I want no talk about this?" She nodded. "If I give it to you here, it saves you half a day, going to court, all the rest," he said. "Please."

As a final convincer, he said, "Ethel, tell her. We don't usually do this, do we?"

"We *never* do it," said Ethel, and stalked out. She came back in with the mail as Mr. Ginzberg and I went on talking, in the curious, relaxed atmosphere of this kind of backhanded legality.

"We won't press you. Ethel, we're doing this—you understand, no talking—because this lady's husband is a professional person, in education—"

"We'll catch up soon," I promised, uneasily.

He asked my husband's age, and I told him.

"What is he thinking of?" he asked, mystified. "He has children!"

Then he remembered we were not really as badly off as it might seem by temporary circumstances.

"But he's at Harvard!" he said.

I laughed out loud, and Ethel turned, surprised. More soberly, I said, "Mr. Ginzberg, I don't really believe you understand about Harvard. Do you know, I know people there, associate professors, well known, who get fifty dollars a year salary?"

"What did you say?" Mr. Ginzberg said, leaning forward again. Ethel was struck to stone at her files, a girl who would not long be a secretary here. Either an office with a Picasso on the wall, or a large engagement diamond on her finger.

"Fifty dollars," I said, rather pleased with the effect of my disclosure. For curiously, though shocked, not only Mr. Ginzberg but even Ethel seemed to regard with respect one of their people who could work for such an honorable institution, where people were paid so little.

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MR. GINZBERG laid aside our files, touching them almost tenderly. On the backs were notations of payments already made: ten dollars; seven-fifty.

I was almost reluctant to leave these pleasant legal chambers, where I had received shelter and guidance, and where I had learned a great truth: that one legal document can be turned aside with another.

"I don't know," said Mr. Ginzberg.

A big, shabby house, I thought. No children. But fifteen hundred volumes in the library. Perhaps he walked around the Reservoir, in the evenings, and heard the dry leaves rustle.

I sneezed, and searched for my handkerchief, preparing to go. Mr. Ginzberg bent, and took from the drawer of his desk a box of Kleenex. He proffered it to me, and I took one.

"I see you have a cold," he said, courteously. I had been sniffling all through the interview. He shook his head, and continued to hold out the box of Kleenex, until I took another tissue, murmuring I thought I had some of my own about me somewhere, thank you.

"Take some more with you," he said, and I could see he thought I was ill provided for indeed—not even enough Kleenex. Professional people. Harvard University.

We parted, and as I left, Ethel smiled brightly, but Mr. Ginzberg seemed tired. He hardly looked up from his desk. Maybe he was thinking he should have been writing stories, all these years.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

SOME JEWISH TRADITIONAL TALES

Five Renditions in Verse

RALPH GORDON

A Judgment of Solomon's

THE Mouse Deer's little tail stood pert:
"I can't deny, your Majesty,
The Otter's little ones were hurt,
Indeed, were damaged mortally.
I simply say it's not my fault.
She left them with me at six o'clock:
'All here, I guess,' she said, taking stock,
'I'm going fishing now.' One fine vault,
And she was off. I said, 'My dears,
Let's just rest quietly in the shade.'
They folded down their little ears,
And went to sleep. Now I'm afraid
You'll never understand my feelings,
Nor how I came to lose my mind.
I lay there peacefully, watched the wheelings
Of the birds, and thought the world was kind.
When suddenly the rum-tum-tum
Of the Woodpecker beating the war-drum
Came loud through the woods. I forgot my charge—
Remember, I am the chief war-dancer—
And let my heels fly, fly at large,
And nicked their skulls—that is my answer.
It's true I killed them, but you see,
The Woodpecker's to blame, not me!"

The Mouse Deer bowed; the Woodpecker
Stood forth: "Your Honor, I defer
To the Mouse Deer; he's our chief war-dancer,
As he has told you. He is, too,
A most uncircumstanced romancer,
But what he has said today is true.
I beat the war-drum; but for a reason:
I saw the Great Lizard wearing his sword."

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The Lizard piped up: "Treason, treason!
The Tortoise was in complete mail, my Lord."

The Tortoise bowed: "True, if you like;
But King Crab was trailing his three-edged pike."

"Who wouldn't, under the circumstances?"
Said King Crab: "The Crayfish were shouldering lances."

"Well," said the Crayfish, "and indeed, why not,
When we saw the Otter slinking down
Upon our young ones, panting hot!
Who would not rise to protect his own?"

"Ah," said the King. "God's justice here
Is shown us, eminently clear.
The Otter, going forth to war,
Brought death on her own young ones; for
Fear links together, link by link;
And where flames rise, the ash must sink."

The River Sambatyon

SAMBATYON, the river of stone and sand,
Round the lost tribes, in their new foreign land,
Rushed faithfully six days, but on its Maker's

Day, stopped, obedient to Divine command,
And rested from its labors: brought to a stand,
Its Sabbath breakers mocked all Sabbath-breakers.

And if, by any chance, a God-forsaker's
Foot strayed down to its sleeping flood, it shot
A punishing flame up, and very smartly got

The sinner's ankle and shin; and as for takers
Of their God's name in vain, they'd get it hot
Up to the thigh, even to the sitting spot.

But that was in the old days, grand and emphatic,
Before God's law was laid up in the attic.

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The Two Talmudists

Two Talmudists, at twilight, rocking, rocking
To the cat's purring, and the clock's tick-tocking—
The one red-headed and his eyebrows raised
As though he were perpetually amazed;
The other with a weepy face run down
Into the sluices of a doleful frown—
Took up the question as to how men grew,
Up toward the head, or downward toward the shoe.

Red-head held up his palms, and with his weasand
Squeezed into the upper registers, he reasoned:
"My father gives me a long coat; I grow,
And after a while, my shins and ankles show.
That proves, I think, we don't grow up, but down."

"No," said the other. "Soldiers come to town.
Their feet are on the ground, but their heads rise
To various heights, according to their size.
That proves that we grow upward, if you please."
He tightened his nose as if to thwart a sneeze,
Hunched up his shoulders, spread his fingers wide,
And looked conclusiveness personified.

That being settled the Talmudists went on rocking,
And the cat purring, and the clock tick-tocking.

Beril Charif

Abstracted Beril Charif, when he lost
His spectacles, looked meditative, tossed
His coat-tails, settled in his chair, and thought.

And first, his hand upon the chair arm, he brought
His thumb a semicircle outward, and said:
"Either some man who needs them—" he shook his head,
And brought his thumb back, "or some man who does not."
He puffed his lower lip and made it jut.
"Now, a man who needs them usually has his own."
He took his forefinger and turned it down.
"And as for the man who does not need them, why
Should he take mine?" He let his forefinger fly
From the logical catapult. "At last we come
To what must be the truth." He began to drum
Upon his chair arm. "Ah!" He seized his nose.
"Picture a man who both needs and has them, close
His book, look absent, yawn, and push them up
To his forehead, and forget about them—Stop!

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That man am I!" And with a gentle tap
He touched his forehead and made his glasses clap.

"Ah," said Beril Charif, "what a thing is logic!
It saves such trouble, and it works like magic."
And with a smile of self-depreciation,
He bowed to his book, and swayed in cogitation.

The Rabbi and the Farmer

THE rabbi waxed retributive, his eye fierce and accusing;
His beard chopped up, his beard chopped down; his words
scarce stopped for choosing;
His finger like a cobra hung above his congregation,
And Tophet smoked upon his tongue, and threatened conflagration.

Now as he spoke, a farmer smote his breast and sighed and blubbered,
And like the preacher, wagged his beard to starboard and to larboard.
"Ah!" said the rabbi, "my poor man! I pink your gizzard, do I?
Your sins come home to you, do they? You see them with a new eye?"

"No," said the farmer, "the fact is, I've lost my goat, your honor.
And what a goat, your reverence! He had just your voice and manner!
And when I look upon your face, my poor heart yearns for his.
Never was a beard so like the beard of my old he-goat as yours is!"

IN THESE retellings of traditional Jewish tales, RALPH GORDON has stayed close to the originals in substance, though the verse and language are, of course, very much his own. Mr. Gordon, who has frequently contributed poetry on Jewish themes to our pages, is a member of the English department of the City College of New York and has published two books on writing, *The Technique of Verse* (1933) and *Verse and Prose Techniques* (1938). His poetry has appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Yale Review*, the *American Poet*, and other periodicals. Born in Odessa in 1898, Mr. Gordon came to the United States in 1907 and studied at City College, Columbia, and Cornell.

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ON THE HORIZON

PASSOVER IN VENICE

A Seder in the Ghetto Vecchio

SIDNEY ALEXANDER

VENICE was, of course, the tourist's Venice—the open ballroom of Piazza San Marco, the black swans of gondolas (twelve times the first day!), the spun tracery of palaces. For us, Venice was also the Jews, the descendants of Shylock.

Why this curiosity to visit Jewish quarters wherever we go? We are not religious, Frances or I; we possess little Jewish culture other than the folk-coloration of our immigrant parents. What do we share with Jews of other lands?—a sense of alienation?—are we bound positively by this negative?

Yet, we were in Venice and it was Passover and Frances wanted to attend a Seder. We walked along interlacing canals, and down dark narrow alleys, and across innumerable curving bridges until we approached the ancient Jewish quarter. Now and then a man passed us, carrying the familiar plush bag which contains the *tefillin* and *tallis*.

"Services must be over," Frances said. "They're already coming back from *shul*."

Suddenly a voice hails us: *Shalom!* We turn around; a little man, middle-aged, shy, is smiling with friendly diffidence, but observing us carefully all the while as if *Shalom* were a magic word that would reveal our secret coloration. "*Shalom*," we replied; and the little man turned to his two companions and nodded triumphantly: "I told you the *stranieri* were Jews."

He introduced himself (in Italian, of course) as Signor S.; were we *inglese?* he asked.

"No, *americani*."

He was delighted. Would we permit him to serve as our *cicerone?*

HE LED us through the Sottoportico del Ghetto, a narrow archway in a wall that circles a dismal slum area, the ancient quarter of the Venetian Jews. Now, many *goyim* have moved into the quarter, he told us (the word shining exotically in its Italian setting); besides, in Italy, he added with a shrug, you can't tell *ebrei* from *cristiani*.

Services were already over at the old *sinagoga* but if we cared to, he would show us the interior. Facing each other across a tiny dreary square, flanked by medieval tenement houses with wash fluttering from the shutters, were two old synagogues—one used by the native Sephardim, one by the more recent Ashkenazi immigrants. Both dated from the 16th century, but from the outside they looked no different from the adjacent tenements. The interiors were rather commonplace too, except for the many copper lamps hanging from the ceiling.

I was neither surprised nor disappointed at the lack of beauty of the synagogues. How can one expect a church art to develop among a people whose laws specifically en-

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SIDNEY ALEXANDER, who here gives an account of a visit to an Italian Jewish community at Passover, has contributed short stories, poetry, and articles to various magazines, and has written for the stage and films. A volume of his poetry, *Tightrope in the Dark*, was published last year, and a novel, tentatively entitled *The Celluloid Asylum*, will be published by Bobbs-Merrill in the fall. Mr. Alexander was born in Brooklyn in 1912 and attended Columbia University.

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join the creation of images, whose worship is of the spirit, whose tabernacle contains the omnipotent Nothing that so startled the plundering legions of Titus? Furthermore, an architecture presupposes a permanent sense of place; is it surprising that the arts of the Jews have been those they could carry in their heads as they fled the tempest?

Our guide interrupted my meditations. There was an even more ancient *sinagoga,* he remarked; the most venerable in Venezia. If we returned tomorrow, he would be happy to conduct us there. So we left the little piazza, and went to visit an old-age home which reminded me of the East Side Bialystoker Home where my grandmother had spent the last years of her life—the same withered old ladies; the same prefigurations of death already on those parchment-wrinkled mummy faces, the same scrawny sticks of bodies. But how astonishing to hear, from those blue lips, not Yiddish, but Italian!

We contributed a thousand-lire note to the upkeep of the home and then made arrangements to attend the Seder that evening—a special Seder given by the Jewish community of Venice for those poor children whose parents are unable to pay the cost of the traditional ceremony.

On the way back to our *pensione,* we passed again the little square where the two synagogues faced each other. On the wall of the Sephardic *shul* I noticed something I had overlooked before: a tablet in white incised stone:

DUECENTO EBREI DI VENEZIA
OTTOMILA EBREI D'ITALIA
SEI MILIONI D'EBREI D'EUROPA
DA CIECO BARBARICO ODIO IN LONTANA
TERRA CACCIATI MARTORIATI SOPPRESSI

IL RICORDO DELL' ATROCISSIMA OFFESA
ALL' UMANA CIVILTÀ
RICHIAMI GLI UOMINI TUTTI
ALLA SANTA LEGGE DI DIO
AI SENTIMENTI DI FRATERNITÀ E DI AMORE
CHE PRIMO ISRAELE AFFERMÒ FRA I POPOLI

(TWO HUNDRED JEWS OF VENICE
EIGHT THOUSAND JEWS OF ITALY
SIX MILLION JEWS OF EUROPE
BY BLIND BARBARIC HATRED IN DISTANT
LANDS HUNTED TORTURED OPPRESSED

THE MEMORY OF THIS MOST ATROCIOUS OFFENSE
AGAINST HUMAN CULTURE
RECALLS ALL MEN
TO THE HOLY LAW OF GOD
TO SENTIMENTS OF FRATERNITY AND LOVE
THAT ISRAEL FIRST AFFIRMED AMONG THE PEOPLES)

A group of grimy urchins were kicking a *calcio* ball around beneath the tablet.

IN THE blue dusk of that same evening we threaded our way back through the maze of Venetian streets to the old Ghetto under the dark *sottoportico* into the slum. Every time I passed through this three-yard-wide arch in the wall I felt that I was putting on again the yellow medieval circle; the word *ghetto* so flagrantly painted on the bricks. But the Italian Jews did not share my feelings; *ghetto* was merely a name for a venerable section of Venice; the word bore no emotional connotations to them. They used it as we might say East Side.

We arrived at the square just as the evening service was over; worshipers were coming down the synagogue steps with a holiday air, smiling and greeting each other with "*Auguri! Auguri!*" Signor S. was already waiting there with two dark-haired, pretty girls in their teens whom he introduced as his daughters. As we walked through the narrow streets toward the community center where the Seder was to be held, he told us that there had been thirteen hundred Jews in Venice before the war, most of them either in business or the professions. Two hundred of these had been taken by the Germans. Of course, they were never heard of again.

Later in the evening, I met a girl who had spent more than a year at Auschwitz. At the Seder she was flirting with a young man and laughing as if her year in a concentration camp was a nightmare that the daylight asserts never really existed. Signor S. himself had lost his aged mother to the Germans. About his wife he said nothing —I had not met her at the morning service, nor was she accompanying us to the Seder. I assumed our friend was a widower.

The Seder was like all Seders—the services chanted a bit more than in America, but the children—the only true citizens of the world—were setting up the usual infernal

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racket and paying no attention to the young assistant rabbi's prayers. The Sephardic Hebrew sounded rather Arabic, with its flattened *a*'s and unaccustomed stresses, but far more curious was to hear "One Only Kid" sung, in lusty horse-opera style, as *"Un Capretto."*

THE meal was poor, we missed the *kneidlach* soup and the carrot *tzimmes*; and the round homemade matzah was not only symbolically, but actually, bread of affliction. Poor Frances groaned audibly when the sweet ceremonial wine (a gift of the JDC) was swiftly removed from the table, once it had served its religious function during the reading of the Haggadah, and replaced by good old Italian Chianti. *"È meglio per lo stomaco,"* said our host, pouring me a tumblerful.

Obviously an important person in the community, Signor S. sat next to us at the official table on a little stage overlooking the hall. We were, I felt with some embarrassment, honored guests, fellow Jews from faraway America; we were, so to speak, on exhibition here on the platform and I dreaded the possibility that I might be called upon to participate in the service. A Haggadah had been set before me—in Hebrew and Italian—and I pretended to be reading along with the rabbi, watching him out of the corner of my eye, turning the pages when he did so. Every once in a while, Fran nudged my arm and hissed: "Turn. . . ."

During the meal, Signor S. questioned me about America.

Was it true that Roosevelt had been a Jew?

No, it was not true.

He thought a moment, then remarked with an air of certainty: *"Ma, Lincoln fu un ebreo, senz' altro. . . ."*

No, I said, Lincoln wasn't a Jew either.

But the beard? And the name "Abraham"? He seemed disappointed.

He was a very devout man, our Signor S., he prompted the rabbi with loud and happy wails; the next morning in the *singagoga,* where we had come to receive our gifts of several old and beautiful prayer books, we saw Signor S. carrying and kissing the Torah with tearful adoration. A very devout Jew—and a very proud Italian. He was rather taken aback when we complained about the monotony of the Italian diet. "What! There are two hundred different kinds of *pasta!*" He could not conceive of a society where some variation of spaghetti was not eaten every day. Yet he personally wanted to end his days in Israel; he had no desire to come to the United States; like most European Jews he had heard unpleasant stories about growing anti-Semitism in America. That didn't exist here in Italy, he said proudly. The Italians were good people; the Church had helped save the Jews from the barbaric Nazis; he personally knew a priest in this neighborhood who had hidden Jews in his house and fed them.

But he felt unhappy about the lack of religious feelings in the younger generation. Sometimes they can hardly get a *minyan* together at the *sinagoga.* A devout Jew, Signor S. . . . But that evening, after the Seder, as we walked with our host and his two daughters to the *vaporetto* on the Grand Canal, Frances asked one of the girls why her mother hadn't attended the Seder.

"O, Mamma è cattolica," replied the girl.

Signor S. flushed; he had obviously not wanted the *americani* to know *that.*

THE next morning, we returned in time to attend the service in the Sephardic *sinagoga.* The *shammes* was a beardless eighteen-year-old; he wore his cutaway and high silk hat self-consciously. He scurried about assisting the rabbi to find for the visiting *americani* a beautiful old Haggadah illustrated with wood-engravings of the Exodus. Then, accompanied by Signor S. and the rabbi, we were led to the *"sinagoga veramente antica"* on the third floor of a crumbling stone building in the Ghetto Nuovo.

This *sinagoga* was really delightful, the wood paneling darkened by age; the lunettes over the windows containing scenes from the Prophets worked in intaglio'd wood, inlaid like mosaic; the altar and Ark were intricately carved, numerous ornate copper lanterns swung from the ceiling like the censers of St. Mark's.

I wondered about the beauty of this synagogue; I had never seen one quite like it. And then the explanation came. It had been redesigned, Rabbi P. told me with pride, by the renowned Longhena, the great 17th-century architect who had designed Santa Maria della Salute and other important

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Venetian churches. I remarked, quite deliberately:

"Don't you find it rather strange that Longhena, a church architect, should also have designed a synagogue?"

"Ma, perchè?" replied the young rabbi with surprise. *"Fu un artista."*

He went into the storeroom, dusty, laden with ancient *talleisim,* Spanish shawls used for the Tabernacle, and hundreds of musty leather-covered prayer books, falling apart with age. The rabbi selected for us several very old volumes still in good condition, and with these treasures, together with the beautiful ancient Haggadah, which had been proudly presented to us by the silk-hatted boy, we walked around the austere square of the Ghetto Nuovo (which is older than the Ghetto Vecchio). In medieval portals one could still make out the carved Hebrew letters, eloquent as half-effaced gravestones. We passed the fragments of a 14th-century Jewish pawnshop—now a fruit stand. The tawdry piazza was lined with miserable apartment dwellings, children danced around in the poverty and dirt, boys kicked a *calcio* ball.

I took a photograph of Signor S. and the young rabbi, and said goodbye. A few paces down the street, a beggar approached us, whining in that sickening, humiliating whine of professional beggars:

"Me Jew. Me poor."

I gave him a few lire.

"Auguri," he said, bowing to the ground. *"Shalom."*

THE RADIO GOD

HUBERT CREEKMORE

In a hot noon on the room shores
of this house, the radio god
empties all oceans in a spread plain
where the mind has forfeit its hills:

not the sun flash on the wave curl,
nor the tumbling froth, nor the push
from the sea floor of the tide swell,
nor saulting spray and its shine,

nor earth buckling at fathoms' depth
in a quake, nor wondering fish:
but a scant trough of general hue
gives the vast a name and no meaning.

For the flood couches a false horizon,
and there are no heights, no deeps,
in the far stretches of placid gray
where the tops of the mesas wash

and the wind smells of a secret carnage
miasmal over the earth,
where the strange buzzards with cloaked eyes
lacerate the public flesh.

In a tight ritual of rhetoric
the god-voice lulls with manna
whose cuddling fear lullabies from fear
the subjects at his bosom.

Cigarettes, lotion, the loaf or wreath
are equal milk from his breast.
With a gaged purpose he shapes our lips
to his catechism of meekness.

Like all gods he has shown how
his office lies more in the tinkle
of a tin soul or a tin horn
than in mighty rebels from heaven.

When the room bursts with a bomb laugh,
as the lapping erodes the last hill,
the radio god sires the idiot god—
both the womb and the child, his will:

the spongy corpse, on melting shoals,
is our sacrifice at his shrine;
and our own eye the astonished eye
in the skull and the god and the brine.

HUBERT CREEKMORE has published five volumes of poetry and two novels. He is presently working on a new novel.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

"UNDERSTANDING NATIONAL CHARACTER"—AND WAR

The Psychological Study of Peoples

MORROE BERGER

AS THE scale of international wars has grown, styles in the analysis of their causes have shifted. In the era before World War I, wars were said to have been caused by rival governments protecting private investors in "backward" areas. Between the two world wars the munitions makers were blamed, along with the nations we used to call the "have-nots," who were envious of the "haves." More recently, corresponding to the efflorescence of the "cultural" sciences of sociology, anthropology, and social psychology, wars are ascribed to the "misunderstandings" between peoples, to the "tensions" that arise because of differences in "national character."

When war, as it does in our day, calls upon all of a nation's technological and human resources, and when ideological differences appear irrational and irreconcilable, "national character," however defined, takes on a special significance. In the current renewal of interest in the study of national character, the anthropologists and psychologists have produced most of the work and have been the most ardent proponents of the attempt to build peace by promoting "understanding" among peoples. Anthropology's credentials are its traditional handling of whole cultures, first applied to primitive societies and lately to highly differentiated communities and nations of the West. Psychology's credentials are its "practical" accomplishments in the field of aptitude testing and employer-employee relations. Hadley Cantril, a prominent Princeton University psychologist who was formerly director of UNESCO's international "tensions project," has written in his introduction to the recently published UNESCO symposium, *Tensions That Cause Wars* (University of Illinois Press, 1950): "The creation and support of the Tensions Project by representatives of many nations is of historic significance when viewed in the light of man's long evolutionary development. For this is apparently the first time in world history when the people of many lands have officially turned to the social scientist to seek his aid in man's quest for enduring peace."

SPURRED by the unprecedented opportunities they had during World War II for advising American policy makers, the practitioners of the "cultural" sciences have jumped into the political pot with both feet, making broad claims about the need for the social scientist's "skills" in the political process. Many of the cultural scientists have become active in the social science division of UNESCO, which was established in 1945 as a specialized agency under the United Nations. According to Ar-

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PSYCHOLOGICAL differences among nations, long disregarded in favor of the more impersonal factors of economics and military power, have in recent years become the object of intensive study by social scientists; to mention only one example of this new interest, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, believing that psychological differences play a large role in causing the tensions that in turn cause wars, has been actively encouraging research on "national character" and related subjects. MORROE BERGER here reviews the recent literature on the problem of national character. Mr. Berger was born in New York City in 1917 and earned his doctorate in sociology from Columbia University. He has written for many journals, general and professional, and is now a member of the foreign affairs department of the American Jewish Committee.

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ticle I of its constitution, UNESCO's purpose "is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture. . . ." The preamble to the constitution declares that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed. . . ." It adds that lack of understanding of one another's ways of life has caused national differences which "have all too often broken into war," and that a durable peace must be founded "upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind."

In its annual conferences UNESCO has adopted so many plans for study and action that its own delegates and consultants, if not its secretariat, have been hopelessly confused and snowed under. In the last two years, however, some self-restraint has been exercised, with the result that UNESCO's program is becoming comprehensible and has a fighting chance of being executed some day. The director-general, in his report to the annual conference last spring, summarized UNESCO's program under seven headings, one of which is the social sciences. Under this heading, besides the project on international cooperation and collaboration, work has been started on two major projects:

I. An examination of tensions *affecting international understanding:* to promote studies of (1) national character, culture, ideals, and legal systems; (2) images nations have of themselves and others; (3) modern methods for changing attitudes; (4) influences making for international understanding and aggressive nationalism; (5) population problems affecting international understanding, including assimilation of immigrants; (6) influence of modern technology on attitudes and relations among peoples.

II. An examination of *racial questions:* to collect data on race, disseminate reliable information, promote educational campaigns based upon this information, and to report on this work to the next UNESCO general conference.

UNTIL now the "tensions project" has progressed further than any other social science venture sponsored by UNESCO. Descriptions of seven different national "ways of life" have been prepared and are scheduled for publication this year. A research survey by Otto Klineberg, a Columbia University social psychologist who is now director of the "tensions project," was published during the last year by the Social Science Research Council under the title *Tensions Affecting International Understanding*. Also published last year is the UNESCO symposium already referred to, *Tensions That Cause Wars,* edited by Hadley Cantril.

Since the latter volume is far less important than the one by Klineberg, we shall consider it first, and rather briefly. Cantril brought together eight scholars to discuss "aggressive nationalism." Meeting for two weeks in Paris in 1948, the eight scholars agreed on a short statement on war and peace, and each prepared a longer statement of his own views. In *Tensions That Cause Wars,* Cantril presents the common and the individual statements, each of the latter interspersed with comments by other participants. The participants were Gordon Allport, a psychologist at Harvard; Gilberto Freyre, Brazilian sociologist; Georges Gurvitch, French sociologist; Max Horkheimer, German sociologist who came to this country in the 1930's; Arne Naess, philosopher at the University of Oslo; John Rickman, British medical psychologist; the late Harry Stack Sullivan, American psychiatrist; and Alexander Szalai, Hungarian Marxist sociologist and political scientist. As Cantril remarks in the introduction, "These contributions may also be viewed as reflections of the present state of the social sciences"—"a condition," he hastily adds, and wisely, "which all social scientists, certainly all the participants in our conference, hope will be rapidly improved. . . ."

IN THEIR common statement the eight scholars made the following main points: (1) Wars are not the necessary consequences of human nature. (2) To secure peace we must keep "group and national tensions and aggressions within manageable proportions" and guide them into "personally and socially constructive" channels "so that man will no longer seek to exploit man." To achieve this goal we must make "fundamental changes in social organization and in our way of thinking." (3) "Economic inequalities, insecurities, and frustrations create group and national conflicts. All this is an important source of tensions. . . ." (4) "Modern wars between nations and groups of nations are fostered by many of the myths, traditions, and symbols of national pride handed down from one genera-

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tion to another." (5) ". . . neither colonial exploitation nor oppression of minorities within a nation is in the long run compatible with world peace."

These assertions are, of course, not startlingly new, but such unanimity by eight scholars of eminence will seem a genuine achievement to anyone who has tried to draft a statement for a committee of intellectuals. What else the common statement represents is hard to say. As editor of the volume, Cantril points out that "if those responsible for high policy could and would act on the combined advice of these eight social scientists as contained in their common statement, there is little doubt in my mind that the tensions now being experienced by people all over the world would be decreased with considerably more speed and surety than seems now to be the case." Cantril is probably right, but if the "high policy" makers were willing and able to use good advice they would surely not have had to wait for these eight scholars to come together in a two-week conference. There has been plenty of good advice available for years—the question is how to get it used by the right people at the right time. This emphasis on the need for "further data," about national character, for example, blocks frank recognition of our failure to put existing knowledge to better use.

THE individual contributions to *Tensions That Cause Wars*, not especially distinguished by their novelty or perception, do not warrant lengthy treatment. It might have been more interesting, exciting, and relevant to international understanding if Cantril had published, instead of these essays, the stenographic record of the final hours of the conference, during which the participants discussed "quite bluntly and frankly the tensions we had felt during our two weeks together: the things we had wanted to say but didn't for fear of offending someone, the irritations we had experienced from another's remark, the inadequacies of our discussion."

Some of this tension does come through anyway in the sedate essays of the volume. All of the contributors except Szalai, the Hungarian Marxist, give some indication that they have certain doubts about their views, need further confirmation of some hunches, and seem willing to consider the possibility that someone else may be right once in a while, too. Szalai, of course, has no doubts about anything, except, upon reflecting after seeing the written contributions of his colleagues, about the wisdom of his having taken part in the sessions. This conference is a pocket-sized version of the difficulties inherent in the peace-through-understanding approach to world affairs. The chairman had taken many precautions to prevent misunderstandings among the scholars and it appears that the conferences were friendly. Away from the conference table, however, as Szalai remarks in a postscript to his own article which he wrote after having read the others in manuscript, "the political and socio-economic determination of the 'home surroundings' began to act." And, of course, they acted with special force upon Szalai, the intellectual Marxist writing in Communist-dominated, Soviet-controlled Hungary. He accuses the other contributors (especially Naess) of making "Communism the bogey" by being "unable to write down the word 'fascism' without adding and Communism.'" In "the friendly international atmosphere" of the conference, Szalai claims, "everybody regarded fascism as a sort of massive criminality, and Communism, even when opposed to it, as a great social movement." Through the "influence of warmongers and reactionaries who form an important part" of the environment of the other contributors, Szalai continues, they felt it necessary to link fascism and Communism. In a familiar vein he goes on to point out parenthetically that had such a linking "been made in the conference room without a heavy rebuke from the chairman," he (Szalai) would have been "forced . . . to interrupt violently, or even to walk out of the conference room."

It is clear, then, that the "friendly" atmosphere of the conference was maintained by the participants' solicitude for their Marxist colleague's sensibilities, which were of a nature irrelevant to the purpose of the meeting: the scientific analysis of aggressive nationalism. In this relatively minor case of international tension there seems to be little that can be traced to lack of "understanding"—as is often the case in international disputes, there was considerable understanding on all sides. The scholars from the West, living in free societies, could in conference and at home intellectually assent to certain notions usually associated with some wing of Marxism, and they did not have to insult their Communist colleague in order to demonstrate conformity to their own national environments. The Marxist Szalai,

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however, living in a police state, found it necessary in the conference to reject all notions except those congenial to the rulers of his own country; and at home he found it necessary, upon cool reflection, to insult his former colleagues in the same way that Soviet and satellite diplomats insult others in international political bodies.* Now, the seven Western scholars appear to have perfectly understood Szalai's delicate position as an intellectual in a police state; but no amount of such understanding will bring Szalai closer to them in public statements if he wants to remain in Hungary as it is now politically organized.

THIS conference, then, reveals some of the difficulties in UNESCO's approach to peace. These difficulties, however, and the value in the UNESCO approach, we leave for later consideration. We turn now to the question of national character and its relation to international understanding and peace, which is the major subject of the most important result to come out of UNESCO's "tensions project," that is, Otto Klineberg's survey of research studies, *Tensions Affecting International Understanding*.

In this valuable book, Klineberg summarizes studies of national character, stereotypes of nations, attitudes and the methods suggested for their modification, and influences making for aggression. The chapter on national character, the largest of all, summarizes various approaches: the older impressionistic and unsystematic accounts by various kinds of observers; the anthropological ventures in this field; use of statistics on birth rate, suicide, and mental disorder; psychiatric and psychoanalytic interpretations; analyses of the content of plays, novels, and other literature; community studies; public opinion and attitude studies; national differences in performance in intelligence and personality tests; semantic issues; and child training and education. In addition to summarizing research already completed, Klineberg offers brief critical comments on each approach. He does not, however, pause to examine seriously the validity of the concept of national character itself. In concluding his observations on the subject, he points out that even if one allows for such cross-national influences as economic status, degree of industrialization and urbanization, and age distribution, "certain differences will still emerge in the behavior and attitudes of people of different nations." His emphasis, therefore, is on methodology: how best to find out what these differences are.

Rather than offer merely some comments on Klineberg's comments on national character, we shall consider the concept itself, its recent revival, the ways in which national character is currently studied, and the validity of the concept.

THE concept of national character implies that the members of a nation, despite admitted differences among them, resemble one another in certain basic patterns of behavior and belief (these may be defined in different ways) more than they resemble the members of other nations. All of us are familiar with statements of national differences in novels, travel books, and studies of society. We ourselves are easily induced to make sweeping generalizations about one nation or another. Just after World War I there was a spurt in the output of books attempting to explain the behavior of nations on the basis of the existence of a "group mind" or of a cultural whole "greater than the sum of its parts." The unexpected savagery of the war stimulated a search for causes to explain the behavior of entire nations seemingly "gone wild."

For a generation after World War I the idea of group (national or racial) character was virtually banished from respectable social science. We were taught that groups are really no more than agglomerations of individuals with distinctive traits of their own. No group, the anthropologists and sociologists often asserted, is inferior to any other in native capacity. This somehow got translated into the notion that people the world over are "basically" the same. And there were few studies of national character until the next war again set scholars and ordinary citizens to thinking about why some national states seemed to want war, or why some nations could defend themselves better than others apparently stronger. By this time the cultural sciences had accumulated and tested a number of new hypotheses on, and methods of study of, social behavior that could easily, as part of the "war effort," and especially in the United States, be

*A hint of Szalai's motivation—and his failure—came in a frightening Jewish Telegraphic Agency dispatch of September 18, reporting that Szalai was arrested in a purge of Jewish leaders of the former Hungarian Social Democratic party.

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applied to the study of nations and to the development of "psychological warfare." As Margaret Mead observes in *And Keep Your Powder Dry* (Morrow, 1942): "So in wartime people began to think again in terms which had fallen into disrepute in the last quarter of a century, in terms of national character."

There was this difference, however. Many of the earlier national character theorists traced national differences to "instincts" or immutable racial traits—that is, they ultimately rested on biology. Current national character studies rest heavily upon Freudian concepts of personality and child rearing, and upon the "culture" concept, stressing that national differences are rooted not in physical or biological distinctions but in varying cultures and systems of value not themselves reducible to instinct, race, or biology.

As KLINEBERG shows, there is a variety of ways to study national character. The best known of these methods is what he calls "descriptions and interpretations by anthropologists," for example, Margaret Mead's *And Keep Your Powder Dry* (and in parts of her more recent *Male and Female*, Morrow, 1949), Geoffrey Gorer's *The American People* (Norton, 1948) and *The People of Great Russia* (Chanticleer Press, 1950), and the late Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (Houghton Mifflin, 1946). These are attempts to comprehend the whole of a nation's "character" in the way an anthropologist reports the totality of a primitive culture.* In his study of the Great Russians, Gorer sets down the fundamental assumptions which underlie his own analyses and which are broadly applicable to others of this group as well. Human behavior, he asserts, is "predominantly learned," that is, individuals act as they see others acting in the same cultural milieu. Despite its variety, human behavior can be "understood." Since the "habits established early in the life of the individual influence all subsequent learning . . . the experiences of childhood are of predominant importance." Further, since in most societies parents punish and reward children, the attitudes of the child toward his parents (and to a lesser degree toward his brothers and sisters) become the "prototypes" of his attitudes toward all the people he subsequently meets.

How does Gorer analyze national character? He seeks the basic traits in child-rearing methods, and then tries to show how these traits are reflected in a wide variety of other kinds of behavior. In his study of Americans, for example, one of his main points is that we reject our fathers, authority in general, and our European cultural heritage; and this is explained by certain similarities in American child rearing. Gorer draws from many sources to illustrate this characteristic: an order of the day by General Patton before his troops invaded Sicily in 1943, our grading of occupations, language habits, fantasies, mass media, family structure and roles, and mass culture.

Less well known but more numerous than this group are the analysts who concentrate on specific cultural manifestations of national character, for example, newspapers, comic strips, novels, plays, and magazine fiction. A particularly impressive contribution of this kind is a recent book by Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites, *Movies: A Psychological Study* (The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1950) in which the authors analyze American films and compare them with French and English films "to see what are the recurrent daydreams which enter into the consciousness of millions of movie-goers"; and what the themes of movies indicate as to American character, its "deeper and less conscious emotional tendencies."

Still another group of scholars, exhibiting a more sociological bent, seek to relate socio-economic to psychological traits in the study of national character. The most substantial contribution of this kind is Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* (Farrar and Rinehart, 1941), which convincingly explains the Germans' receptivity to Nazism by bringing together evidence from their economic and political history and their religious traditions, all interpreted within the framework of a modified Freudian theory of character structure.

According to Klineberg, the "merit of Fromm's study seems . . . to lie in the combination of approaches, all directed toward the solution of the same problem." In a contribution to a recent symposium, *Culture and Personality*, edited by Sargent and Smith (The Viking Fund, 1949), Fromm states that his notion of "social character" refers to the "nucleus of character structure" which most

* See "The New Anthropology and Its Ambitions," by Robert Endleman, COMMENTARY, September 1949.

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members of a given culture share, as distinct from their differing individual characters. This social character is shaped by a society's social structure. Such a structure is usually relatively fixed and requires that individuals act in a certain way. "It is the function of the social character," Fromm continues, "to shape the energies of the members of the society in such a way that their behavior is not left to conscious decisions whether or not to follow the social pattern but that *people want to act as they have to* act and at the same time find gratification in acting according to the requirements of the culture."

Some younger sociologists and social psychologists have adopted the Fromm position, impressed by its astute combination of sociology and psychoanalytic concepts. Thus far these younger scholars have not produced studies of specific nations, but it is expected that in a few years their work will be appearing. Their position is well summarized by Alex Inkeles, of the Russian Research Center at Harvard University, who wrote last year in the *Antioch Review*: "The burden of the available work in the scholarly disciplines concerned with social relations indicates that there are distinctive patterns of reaction to given situations which may be used to distinguish the peoples of particular national states. These patterned responses, along with . . . symbols and value systems . . . are not independent of political and economic institutions; indeed they are intimately interwoven with them. But they may exercise an independent influence on the selective apprehension of experience, and have a profound effect on the opportunities for success of *new* institutional forms in the political and economic realm." If this new generation of scholars can translate their theoretical sophistication into substantive studies of national cultures, we may see the growth of a formidable science of national character.

IT MAY be helpful to draw together in more detailed fashion the data that support one interpretation of American character that has been given by some of these scholars. In so doing we will illustrate the way in which the evidence for a trait as a national characteristic is accumulated and interpreted, as well as some of the problems involved in the procedure.

Several years ago, Nathan Leites and Ernst Kris, in seeking an explanation for what they considered significant differences between the propaganda of World War I and that of World War II, elaborated the concept of "privatization" ("Trends in Twentieth Century Propaganda," in *Psychoanalysis and the Social Sciences*, Vol. I, International Universities Press, 1947). Today, according to Leites and Kris, we are more intimately affected by public affairs than were people of bygone eras, yet we feel less and less able to understand or to influence the events which shape our lives; hence political facts take on the aura of natural events, like the weather, having no connection with the individual's beliefs or moral values—these latter are given scope only in personal affairs.

Other observers have given "privatization" a more strictly American application. Thus Gabriel A. Almond, in a recent impressive study of our foreign policy as it reflects the American character (*The American People and Foreign Policy*, Harcourt, Brace, 1950), states that our concern with private affairs excludes attention to public affairs. "The characteristic response to questions of foreign policy," he adds, "is one of indifference." The alternating involvement (forced by outside events) in, and withdrawal from, foreign affairs, Almond continues, gives rise to the danger of "over-reactions" to threats to American security as well as to the temporary periods of stabilization. He then presents five more characteristics of American foreign policy which follow from American national character. For example: "Mood-Simplification" is the tendency to rely on easy solutions to subtle problems, as revealed in the unconditional surrender policy in World War II and "non-fraternization" in the occupation of Germany. "Optimism-Pessimism," is an excessive reaction to situations insufficiently analyzed. Thus Americans tended, during the war, to be over-optimistic about the possibility of "getting along" with Russia, whereas since the frustrations beginning in 1946 they have been overly pessimistic. Published before America's reaction to the invasion of South Korea, this book reads as though based at least in part upon these later developments.

Another source of evidence of "privatization" has been advanced in analyses of the themes of American films and plays as contrasted with those of other nations. In the Wolfenstein-Leites volume already mentioned, *Movies: A Psychological Study*, the authors conclude that the "major plot configuration" in British films shows conflict to be internal, shows that the "danger lies in ourselves, especially in our impulses of destructiveness." In French films the

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danger is external, but it is rooted in the "nature of life itself," the conflict being between man and a natural order which always defeats him. In the American films, however, the hazards are not within ourselves, as in the British films; further, while external, "they are not rooted in the nature of life itself," as in the French films. Rather, the American films show the danger to be from another person or a situation which the hero sets out to master in a direct, personal struggle from which he always emerges the winner. Along the lines of this investigation is another by Donald V. McGranahan and Ivor Wayne, who examined the themes and several other aspects of the forty-five most popular plays of 1927 in Germany and the United States ("German and American Traits Reflected in Popular Drama," *Human Relations*, 1948, Vol. I, pp. 429-55). Among their conclusions are the assertions that (1) the German dramas are more ideological, philosophical, and historical than the American plays, of which the great majority deal with personal, private problems; (2) where the hero is a rebel against society, in the American plays he rebels on personal grounds and for personal happiness, whereas in the German plays he rebels in the name of an ideal that is beyond personal concerns.

Still more evidence of "privatization" in American life appeared almost daily in the early months of the fighting in Korea, when news dispatches frequently pointed out the personal comforts which have to be provided for American soldiers at the front and the bare minimum with which the Koreans managed. In the army studies of adjustment to military life (*The American Soldier*, Vol. I, Princeton University Press, 1949), the authors conclude that Americans in uniform were "preoccupied with minimizing their discomforts, acquiring higher rank or pay, securing jobs which would offer training useful in civilian life, displaying aggressions against the Army in many different ways, and in getting out of the Army as fast as possible. . . ."

This evidence from army life indicates that "privatization" is in part shaped by the possible personal satisfactions provided by our relatively high standard of living. But "privatization" is also a response to urban life with its intolerable mass of personal contacts; if each of these contacts required a positive, personal reaction, then, in Simmel's words, "one would be completely atomized internally and come to an unimaginable psychic state." (*The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. by Kurt H. Wolff, The Free Press, 1950.) A third determinant of "privatization" is the specialization of contemporary life: there are the authorities for all manner of functions, even for the most "personal" acts of charity. The homely virtues have become institutionalized; it is now less necessary for individuals to perform acts of charity, which are the recognized province of specialized agencies for care of the aged, the indigent, the homeless, and the lonely. Evidence of urban unconcern with stark terrors, which in simpler societies evoke direct personal aid, appears in the daily press. Thus in 1948 the New York *Herald Tribune*, in reporting the robbery of a liquor store, told how the owner pursued the thieves in the crowded streets for seven blocks, shouting "Stop, thief!" without being able to enlist anyone's help. "No one looked around," he was quoted as saying. "You could carve somebody up on the sidewalk there, and they'd think it was a radio stunt." Finally, he called the specialists, police in a radio car, and they found the thieves. Another example: in 1948 a Chicago housewife, according to the New York *Times*, was trapped on a second-story window sill while cleaning her windows. Several men to whom she appealed only laughed. Someone called the specialists, firemen with a ladder, and they rescued her after she had been trapped for more than half an hour. Several years ago a *Life* magazine photographer took pictures of a man sleeping on the stairway of a New York subway entrance. Hundreds of persons went by, over and around him, but no one stopped to see whether he was hurt or dead or just asleep. Two specialists with limited functions in such a situation, subway employees, moved him off the stairway, and another specialist, a policeman, awoke the sleeper and sent him away.

In questions of peace and war, too, "privatization" and specialization reign. We have "experts" to handle these problems, and so we feel quite free to ignore them. Under the impact of frequent wars and continuing threats of war, however, "privatization" tends to be overcome and, as Almond has shown, involvement tends to become more habitual and stable.

Thus far the writers on national character have had the field to themselves. They have written many books and articles in a relatively short period of time, but there have been few evaluations of their work except in brief, hasty book reviews, occasional articles in the scholarly

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journals, and in papers read at meetings of the professional societies. The advocates of national character studies have been quick to defend themselves and to move on to new positions in the academic struggle.

More than a decade ago a prominent British Labor party writer, Hamilton Fyfe, published a book called *The Illusion of National Character* (Watts, London, 1940) in which he attacked the validity of the concept of national character itself. "A nation," he wrote, "is not a natural unit, like a herd of buffalo or a pack of wolves. It is largely an accidental unit." The differences within nations are so great, he concluded, as to preclude the possibility of defining a truly national character. Such a character, according to Fyfe, is simply what a nation's rulers want it to look like to others.

Because of the great differentiation among ethnic groups in American urban society some writers insist that there can be no over-riding national character. Thus, in *Anti-Semitism and Emotional Disorder* (Harper, 1950) Nathan Ackerman and Marie Jahoda suggest that we need more knowledge of the distribution of certain traits among nations. The national character concept, they continue, is especially difficult to apply to Jews. If character is transmitted through child rearing, the Jews cannot be said to have a national character at all because their patterns of child rearing usually follow those of the nation (and social class, we might add) to which they belong. Yet, Ackerman and Jahoda rightly point out, Jews themselves insist that they have a certain common character.

Cutting across national character is a character of still another kind, that common to the members of the same occupation or profession or social class. David Hume centuries ago pointed to the differences between priest and soldier which prevail in all nations. And Marx and Engels proclaimed in their Communist Manifesto over a hundred years ago that "modern industrial labor, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him [the proletarian] of every trace of national character."

Another criticism of the national character concept emphasizes that stereotypes of various nations have changed much more rapidly than national character itself could have changed. Klineberg, for example, reports a summary by Pryns Hopkins of a large number of studies of the Japanese. Hopkins found "practical unanimity," according to Klineberg, on cleanliness, order, obedience, traditionalism, and nationalism. Earlier writers, however, usually mentioned a strong sense of honor and scrupulous keeping of promises, while later writers (especially during World War II) mentioned treachery and deceit. Such changes in stereotype, of course, reflect changing political relations, but it is important to note the large area of agreement between the earlier and later comments. Klineberg also reports the preliminary results of a study, conducted at the New School for Social Research, of Russian estimates of American national character. Before 1917 Russians emphasized the democratic features of American society, tendencies toward social reform, and willingness to change. Soviet Russian writings, however, praise American technology, efficiency, and standards of living, but attack American conceptions of democracy. These changes, of course, suggest the influence of changing political relations and of the ruling groups in a police state.

To the claim that differences within nations preclude the possibility of a science of national character, the defenders reply that, while these differences must be considered, there is nevertheless an underlying unity which warrants the use of the concept of national character. This unity they have tried many times to indicate in their books and articles on specific nations. To the claim that nations change, the answer is made that national character studies can take account of such changes, and that the changes do not rule out the possibility of some kind of equilibrium at any given moment in the history of a nation. National character scholars, further, admit class, occupational, and religious differences are influential, but insist that a national character emerges that transcends as well as comprehends these intra-national distinctions.

One of the more interesting defenses of the concept has been advanced by Gregory Bateson in his contribution to a symposium edited by Goodwin Watson for the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (*Civilian Morale*, Reynal and Hitchcock, 1942). Bateson argues that the very differences within nations are related to one another in a system of bi-polar traits such as dominance-submission, succoring-dependence, and spectatorship-exhibitionism. National character is expressed in the special way these bi-polarities are combined. Bateson makes no claim that it is possible at present to estimate differences in degree of the develop-

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ment of a given bi-polarity in two or more nations; but he does insist that very large qualitative differences can now be verified. He offers one such great difference in an example which has often been quoted. At meals, Bateson says, English children are spectators of their parents' exhibitionism; the child listens to the parents, who dominate the proceedings. In America the roles are reversed. Here the child performs for the parents and dominates the proceedings. This difference, Bateson goes on, probably explains why Englishmen appear "arrogant" (dominant) to the American, who appears "boastful" (exhibiting, seeking approbation) to the Englishman. In cases of such extraordinary differences among the members of a nation that it would be impossible to arrive at a common character, Bateson says, the scholar must take a "short cut" and "treat heterogeneity as a positive characteristic of the common environment." On this hypothesis, he adds, the scholar will look for common "tendencies towards glorying in heterogeneity for its own sake (as in the Robinson-Latouche 'Ballad for Americans') and towards regarding the world as made up of an infinity of disconnected quiz-bits (like Ripley's 'Believe It or Not')."

PROBABLY the main criticism of particular studies of national character is the almost complete absence of data by which to compare other nations with the one under study. Of what value is it to say that Americans are attached to "private" values, that they like to make money to spend it, or love to acquire gadgets, if we are not shown conclusively that these traits are not merely American but exclusively so, or at least more so than they are French, English, or Russian? The studies of specific manifestations of national culture, such as those of Leites-Wolfenstein on the movies and McGranahan-Wayne on the drama, often present comparative data, but the general essayistic treatments, such as Gorer's, Mead's, and other less ambitious ventures, give the reader no basis upon which to decide for himself that certain traits really differentiate one nation from the others.

Further, what some writers call characteristics of Western society as a whole other writers call specifically American. Karl Mannheim in *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (Harcourt, Brace, 1940) and Leites and Kris in the propaganda article mentioned above speak of "privatization" as characteristic of the entire West, but this quality has been said by others to be peculiarly American. Almost every writer on American national character claims Americans are competitive, that they overvalue love, are overstimulated to consume goods and services, are oriented toward material values, and feel a need for success. These traits, however, are precisely the ones which Karen Horney, in *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (Norton, 1937), attributes to Western man in general. Are the students of American national character reducing a Western trait to a specifically American trait, or is Horney (in the company of others) generalizing an American trait into a Western trait?

A simple criticism has been that the anthropologists who study contemporary complex societies are not familiar enough with the facts. If true, this charge would not be surprising, since Gorer, Mead, and Benedict, for example, have studied Japanese character without going to Japan. John Embree, a scholar who has been in Japan, recently pointed out (*World Politics*, April 1950) that these three anthropologists in particular, while they rest much of their analysis of Japanese character upon patterns of child rearing and home life there, are simply in error as to the facts.

Other critics have doubted the validity of deriving national character from child-rearing patterns, or have asked whether these patterns are themselves not secondary to other social, economic, and especially historical processes.* Klineberg, in a contribution to the aforementioned symposium, *Culture and Personality*, remarks that Benedict points out that teasing in the early life of the Japanese makes him fear ridicule later on. Klineberg then asks whether one could not "argue that exposure to considerable teasing in childhood might, on a purely logical basis, make one relatively immune" to it later on. This touches a most important question which still seeks an answer. Assuming that childhood has a major causal effect upon character, how do we know just what the effect is? A bullying older brother, for example, may make one child ruthless in his demand for affection and may instil in another child a deep respect for the rights of others.

The unnecessary lengths to which the emphasis upon child rearing is pushed can be best appreciated in Gorer's *The People of Great Russia*, in which the practice of tightly swaddling

*See Harold Orlansky's discussion of this subject in "Destiny in the Nursery," COMMENTARY, June 1948.

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infants is advanced as one explanation among several (which remain unmentioned) for many aspects of Russian political behavior. The swaddled infant, says Gorer, experiences his weakness as absolute, and the only alternative to this absolute subordination in the swaddled condition is complete freedom when temporarily unswaddled from time to time. This may explain, Gorer continues, the fact that Great Russians do not see intermediate positions, only the extremes of dominance and submission. This inability to see positions between the two extremes is apparent, Gorer points out, in Soviet foreign policy—for example, in Russia's insistence that national contributions to a United Nations armed force should be absolutely equal rather than on some proportionate basis, and Russia's inability to envisage a modicum of independence for her satellites. However, it may be pointed out that the Kremlin is perfectly able to see an "intermediate position" between extremes in the levying of national contributions to the UN treasury and for other specific funds if not to its proposed armed force—and this for obvious political reasons. Seeing "intermediate positions" means sharing power, something which dictatorships try to avoid on political grounds. Further, not only cannot the Russian Communists see intermediate positions, but neither can Communists born and reared in the United States, Japan, France, Germany, or anywhere else, where they probably were not swaddled as the Russian Communist leaders were (if indeed the latter do not come from middle-class and upper-class homes where swaddling, according to Gorer, was not usual).

THESE criticisms, it is clear, deal mainly with ambitious attempts to define the character of specific nations, usually on the basis of child-rearing patterns. The study of national character, however, is already beyond this oversimplifying, overly optimistic stage. The students of national character seem to be settling down to the relative dullness of producing solid, verified pieces of research of a comparative nature. But there are several problems which will plague even the strictly scientific student of national character: which features of national behavior are important in the study of character; the relative value of studies of individual behavior itself as against its manifestation in certain formal institutions like law, political organization, and so on; and the interpretation of some of these formal structures, especially law.

Particularly important is the question of how to prevent national character studies from having a politically conservative bias. Those who favor change are likely to insist that certain institutions are not rooted in national character, but are rather accidental or imposed by the ruling groups. On the other hand, persons who oppose institutional change are likely to claim that the existing institutions are so profoundly rooted that they are part of the nation's fundamental character. Thus, Gorer points out that if his hypotheses are correct, "it would imply that it would be psychologically intolerable for Great Russia to live for any length of time without an idealized Leader, that a Leader is necessary to save them from political anarchy and personal disintegration." He says, also, that Americans' faith in private enterprise "is not necessarily a screen behind which personal interests and hopes for profit are defended; it is a deeply sincere, quasi-religious moral attitude." And Mead argued during World War II: "All the shibboleths, that we are not fighting against the German people but against their Kaiser—or their Dictator, their military clique or their Nazi party—against their hierarchical and undemocratic political institutions, but not against them themselves, obscure the connections between a people and the institutions under which they have been reared, between the leader and the led, between a culture and the human beings who carry that culture."

The real issue here is, how close is this connection in particular cases? The national character analysts have thus far assumed the connection is very close, but there is some evidence, especially on group relations in the United States, that anthropologists and sociologists may have overestimated the strength of certain cultural forms and the degree to which they govern individual behavior. Sociologists and anthropologists have been especially impressed, for example, with the solidity of Southern white sentiment for segregation in all relations except those which clearly exhibit the dominance of the white. They have often argued that this sentiment is unresponsive to so "mechanical" and "external" a force as law. In recent years, however, some of them have pointed out that custom, though influential, is not uniform; some customs or values exist alongside their contradictories, and many persons adhere to certain values not through personal conviction or out of psychological need but out of a sometimes erroneous feeling that all other "respectable" people

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are profoundly attached to these values. Consider one example, the rapid change in segregated education in the last few years. Up to 1948 the Southern states had successfully used various means to prevent Negroes from attending state-supported institutions for whites. Then in January of that year the United States Supreme Court held that Oklahoma must provide for Negroes an education in law equal to that provided for white residents of the state, and at the same time. Within a year several Southern universities had gone further than the decision required in admitting Negroes to classes with whites, and last June the Supreme Court felt able to go so far as virtually to outlaw any form of segregation in higher education supported by public funds. This decision, too, has already been followed by breaches in the wall of segregation which students of social relations, only two or three years ago, did not think possible in our generation. By emphasizing seemingly dominant values, the national character analysts tend to overestimate their rootedness and to underestimate the possibility of change.

National character analysts must, therefore, find methods of determining what kind of national behavior is really "basic," or represents genuine national *character*, and what kind is relatively superficial and without enduring effect or meaning. Until now too much attention has been given to trivia of a kind to be found in travelogues. George Orwell, in a passing comment on national character in his little book on England, *The Lion and the Unicorn* (Secker and Warburg, London, 1941), pointed to this problem. "National characteristics," he wrote, "are not easy to pin down, and when pinned down they often turn out to be trivialities or seem to have no connection with one another. Spaniards are cruel to animals, Italians can do nothing without making a deafening noise, the Chinese are addicted to gambling. Obviously such things don't matter in themselves. Nevertheless, nothing is causeless, and even the fact that Englishmen have bad teeth can tell one something about the realities of English life."

The British sociologist Morris Ginsberg has suggested a way to avoid the trivia which emerge from a cataloguing of individual traits. In *Reason and Unreason in Society* (Harvard University Press, 1948) he claims that the "indirect method of studying national characteristics by an analysis of the psychological basis of the collective achievements of peoples has undoubtedly proved more fruitful than the direct method based on the observation of individual behavior." He then tries to show how English law, philosophy, politics, foreign policy, and religion all exhibit a strong element of empiricism and individualism. Yet Ginsberg also warns that institutions often reflect primarily the influence of dominant groups, that analysis of a nation's current institutions must be supplemented by historical and causal studies.

The study of institutions as evidences of national character raises the problem of interpretation too. Suppose we consider the laws against the manufacture and sale of "obscene articles"—does the existence of such laws mean that a nation is given to the use of these articles or that it is profoundly opposed to them, or that it is indifferent and the laws are merely the result of lobbying by small interested groups? Hamilton Fyfe has posed this question too: "If we say there is so much cruelty to children in England that a Society has to be kept up to prevent it, its existence is held to prove that the English are not cruel."

FINALLY, we may ask what national character has to do with international understanding and what international understanding has to do with peace?* There is no reason why national character studies should not further our understanding of human behavior. What such understanding has to do with peace, however, is more difficult to decide. Fyfe, for example, has argued that acceptance of the very principle of national character leads to distrust of one nation by another and is a "frequent source of misunderstanding, hostility, mutual dislike."

It is true that nations exhibiting differences have warred against one another, but it would be naive to conclude from this fact that the conflicts were caused by the cultural separation. In our own day, with the passing of colonial adventures, the major wars are obviously between nations sharing the same cultural tradition, or showing a similar technological development. Nations go to war because that is a culturally

*A detailed examination of the UNESCO theory, stated in the opening to its constitution, that "wars begin in the minds of men," is given in *Wars and the Minds of Men* (Harper, 1950), by Frederick S. Dunn, director of the Yale Institute of International Studies. This book, which appeared too late for extended discussion here, views the UNESCO theory as resting upon communication techniques, and seeks to review the present state of knowledge about how people's minds can be changed in a manner that will make peace more secure.

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accepted way of settling disputes which do not yield to diplomacy. It is unlikely that "misunderstanding" causes war or that better "understanding" in the UNESCO sense will prevent it. In one of the sanest discussions of the contribution of psychology to international understanding, Goodwin Watson suggests that in recent wars the differences among allies have been even greater than those between enemies (*The American Psychologist*, March 1949).

Another assumption of the UNESCO philosophy and the peace-through-understanding advocates is that increased understanding means greater friendship. This, too, is a naive approach. There is, further, an implication that the issues over which nations go to war are imaginary. There is often a curious species of Communist fellow-traveling and Progressive-party soft-headedness involved here. Nobody would argue that war with the Nazis might have been avoided had we better "understood" their "point of view." In fact, had our leaders been blessed with such understanding a war might have been precipitated sooner than it was. Understanding does not eliminate *conflict;* it may even precipitate conflict sooner than would be the case if there were less or no understanding. But understanding may also prevent war precisely by bringing on conflicts of one kind while avoiding the conflict that turns into war.

We often hear the argument that the present cold war could be ended if we only "understood" Soviet Russia better than we do. Leaving aside the genuine pro-Communists to whom "understanding" in this case is synonymous with acceptance of the Soviet position, there are many others who, still believing that Communism the world over is a genuine social reform movement, honestly think that better "understanding" of Russia can reduce the danger of war. To such persons "understanding" is not the same as yielding at once to Soviet demands but requires "peaceful overtures" such as a large American loan to the USSR, somehow curbing "anti-Soviet and Red-baiting hysteria" here, a demonstration of American "good faith" by a disarmament gesture, an American disavowal of atomic warfare, and so on. In the end, of course, this type of "understanding" is no different from the kind which Communists and fellow-travelers propose.

International understanding, like any other kind, would seem to be a tool and a technique which can be used in various ways, depending on one's purposes. If we increase our understanding of Russian national character, the nature of the Stalinist regime, and the psychology of its leaders, we shall be better able to promote peace with the Kremlin or to wage war against it. The understanding in itself, however, like all knowledge, does not automatically lead to or preclude either of these courses. It only gives one greater power to choose among several possible courses of action. To be useful in this, or any other way, such understanding must make no naive assumptions about "friendship" between peoples or between their leaders, especially where the latter, as in the Soviet Union, prevent contact between their people and the people of other nations.

It is probably fruitless to seek for the causes of all wars in all eras. There is, however, ample evidence that major wars in our own era are caused by the expansionist aims of leaders who subject whole nations to dictatorial rule, block orderly, peaceful change in political or economic structure, and prevent the free expression of opinion. The more we understand the ways in which such leaders seize and maintain power, their personal psychology and that of the nations which continue to be ruled by them, the forces that sustain and those that weaken such regimes, the better we shall understand how to build peace for the immediate and the more distant future. In the search for this kind of understanding the anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists can do much to help. But they must learn to avoid easy analogies between individual and national behavior, or between intergroup relations in the United States and international political relations in the world, and to avoid banal pronunciamentos which too often expose their political orientations without presenting scientific findings that tell us things we either do not know or which had not been sufficiently confirmed to be used as a basis for action. They must learn more about politics and the history and development of international relations, the nature of political leadership and to what it responds, and, what is of immediately crucial importance, the ways in which the knowledge that we already have can be applied by the persons and groups who make decisions in our world. As Watson told a meeting of psychologists last year, "We can direct our research at the power problems of society. This might cause insurance companies to reclassify the psychologist as a hazardous occupation."

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Mr. Daiches and American Judaism

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Daiches' personal view of American Judaism ["American Judaism: A Personal View," February] strongly reminds me of a friend of mine who arrives at identical conclusions in a somewhat simpler fashion. He will eat in a kosher restaurant and to his *fleishige* meal will demand butter. If the butter is denied him—as it mostly is—he will label the owner as backward, preposterous, unmodernistic. But, oh boy, should his insistent demands bring forth the butter: How much pretension! Such dishonesty! These hypocrites! . . .

Mr. Daiches' inner confusion is well described by John Milton whom lecturer Daiches obviously knows better than American Judaism:

Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to men;
Unless there be who think not God at all:
If any be, they walk obscure;
For of such doctrine never was there school,
But the heart of the fool,
And no man therein doctor but himself.
Yet more there be who doubt His ways not just,
And to His own edicts found contradicting,
Then give the reins to wand'ring thought,
Regardless of His glory's diminution;
Till, by their own perplexities involved,
They ravel more, still less resolved,
But never find self-satisfying solution.

(From *Samson Agonistes*)

Eric O. Sonneman

Chicago, Illinois

To the Editor of Commentary:

David Daiches' article on American Judaism is described as "A Personal View." May I remind your readers that his viewpoint is not at all personal, in the senses of original, individualistic, peculiar, and rare. It is precisely the viewpoint of the would-be and actual escapist, which the protagonists of Judaism had to contend against from the very beginning of the modern era.

This viewpoint . . . is characterized first of all by an *apologia pro vita sua*. The faith one deserts must be shown in its "true" form, which is totally irrelevant to modern life and which presents no challenge to the modern mind. Hence, the author's insistence that the only kind of Judaism which is of value is the unmodern variety—which he does not observe. If one is minded to reject Judaism, one finds the task made easy by identifying it "without pussyfooting" as the faith which declares "Moses received the Torah at Sinai". . . .

Things look different when you see them for a brief moment, while you stand on the threshold, just before you slam the door. You wish to embalm Judaism and preserve it as a beautiful memory, noble in its way but belonging to the past, and you are embarrassed by an evidence that it is still "alive and kicking." Hence, the author's passionate assertion that Judaism cannot survive if it does not hold to "a unique religious position." But, why must it be "unique" and in no way "comparable" in order to deserve a claim upon the future? Must I abandon my faith, my associations, and the pattern of life based upon them, as well as the multifarious values and sub-values clustering about my convictions regarding God, Torah, and Israel, because some groups here and some groups there cherish similar beliefs? . . . Already the great and lonely intellectual giant of pre-modern Lithuanian Jewry, Elijah, Gaon of Vilna, declared that "wisdom and Torah flow from one source" . . . .

Rabbi Jacob B. Agus

Beth El Congregation
Baltimore, Maryland

To the Editor of Commentary:

I was delightfully shocked in perusing David Daiches' article to find that Commentary, although consistently asserting that "its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief," had, for the first time since its inception, deigned publication of an article written by one intoxicated with right-wing traditional Judaism; and utterly shocked not to find included within the same issue a caustic liberal retort to Dr. Daiches' perspective of American Judaism. Congratulations!

Rabbi George Rosenthal

Sinai Temple
Tacoma, Washington

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To the Editor of Commentary:

My reaction to the article on American Jewish life by Daiches was one of surprise, that the teaching and example of the father and uncle of the writer, whom I knew well, and who engaged the respect and esteem of the whole community, has touched David Daiches so little that he has become an avowed agnostic.

Much that he has written may apply to England as well as to America, and with equal force to France or to Israel. There is, however, an antidote, as Daiches so ably puts it—a deeper understanding and a greater knowledge. . . .

The article is scholarly and provocative and its lesson cannot be avoided, and I congratulate both you and the writer upon it.

Isidore Wartski

Bangor, North Wales
England

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Daiches insists on "either the genuine thing or nothing at all" in Jewish liturgy and tradition. Such a request assumes that Judaism is a clearly definable creed, way of life, or racial heritage. This view seems to rule out, too, any significant modifications of the "thing" which is Judaism. Mr. Daiches is not the sole advocate of "authentic" Judaism. In an article by Will Herberg in the *Jewish Frontier* for October 1950, Rabbi Bernstein's version in *Life* of "What the Jews Believe" was dismissed, somewhat condescendingly, as "neither the old nor the new" but the "modern."

To hold that Judaism *per se* should be unchanging and take the same forms everywhere constitutes a curiously petulant theory of history, which, apparently, is gaining favor among Jewish thinkers. . . .

Yet Judaism does not appear to have remained "authentic" for any length of time without losing its validity or creativity. Biblical Judaism was different from post-Biblical Judaism; the Judaism of Spain's Golden Age was different from that which developed in the Pale of Russia. Judaism in Israel is, and should be, unlike the Judaism which evolved, or will evolve, in the United States. And if change and progress have been compatible with "authentic" Judaism in the past, it is useless to search in America for a Judaism which answers the needs of men in England, Scotland, or Poland. . . .

John Appel

Miami, Florida

To the Editor of Commentary:

David Daiches' article in the February issue of Commentary was most revealing, not only of quite evident difficulties in the American Jewish community, but in the author's mind as well. Mr. Daiches' position brought to mind an anecdote told me by Dr. Joseph Rauch of Louisville: A number of years ago his congregation was asked to express itself on a proposed change of the time of service, from Sunday morning to Friday evening. One of the most violent opponents to this suggestion was a man who never attended services at any time. Dr. Rauch, curious as to the reason for this strange behavior, called on the man and asked for an explanation. The reply was quite simple: "I much prefer not attending services on Sunday morning to not attending services on Friday evening." . . .

Rabbi Lou H. Silberman

Temple Israel
Omaha, Nebraska

To the Editor of Commentary:

From David Daiches' article one can only infer that God must have written off the "Men of God" who parade noisily in His Name. How else account for the fact that He chose an agnostic to voice His Call in the wilderness?

Jacob B. Shohan

West Orange, New Jersey

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . In the "Epistles to the Jews of England" by Solomon Schechter (Commentary, February 1945), one finds the same shortcomings of American Jews prevalent in the native land of Dr. Daiches. Assimilation, disintegration, revival, and survival are conflicting forces that make the patterns of life and thought everywhere. Surveying the local scene is helpful but norms which make for values cannot be gathered in the streets of New York, Edinburgh, or even of Tel Aviv. It is to be regretted that Dr. Daiches did not remain longer to know us better. His deeper insights based on wider knowledge might have been more helpful.

Rabbi Jacob Singer

Temple Mizpah
Chicago, Illinois

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Like Mr. Daiches I am a Jew (let us not bother with the feminine gender) but without benefit of Orthodoxy. And like him, too, I am an agnostic. I also go occasionally to the synagogue, for a feeling of identity with a group whose traditions I share and whose vicissitudes will be mine. Like him, too, I am saddened by the artificiality and lack of genuineness in the modern Reform synagogue. But, unlike Mr. Daiches, I do not believe that a synagogue

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practicing the Orthodox ritual can give the answer to the needs of a human being living in 1951. . . .

At the same time I keep my identity as a Jew. Mr. Daiches would ask me what I hold fast to. I would reply: an identification with a group that has a common heritage, a historical culture, an ethics that are rooted in a Jewish humanistic concern down the ages. . . . And it is this emphasis on humanism that keeps me a Jew. . . .

If Mr. Daiches has stimulated the American Jew to clarify his own position, annoying many, causing others to take sober thought, then, confused as Mr. Daiches seems to be, his contribution has real value.

CAROLYN A. LISBERGER

San Francisco, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It may be that Dr. Daiches has genuine doubts about the intellectual validity of the Orthodox position; and it may be that he is repelled by the cultural and aesthetic puerility of the more "modern" forms of Jewish religion. But it may also be that Dr. Daiches (subconsciously?) wants to relegate Judaism altogether into the past, to be done with it, to render it "classical" and dead, like the Greek and Latin civilizations. Just being Jewish makes him uncomfortable ("Let us have less emotion about Jewishness. . . . Let us have less nationalism . . . . I am a man and I am interested in humanity"). But, as the son of an Orthodox rabbi, he feels a bit guilty about repudiating his heritage altogether. So he glorifies his childhood.

Rabbi Baeck ["The Task of Being An American Jew," March], it seems to me, offers an answer that does not come to grips with the fundamental escapism of Dr. Daiches. Dr. Daiches does not want to be a part of a living Jewish people, with its nobilities and vulgarities both. Yet Rabbi Baeck calls his attention to the Reform movement whose "outstanding historic accomplishment" was to enable the Jew "to rediscover himself and become again radically conscious of his existence." On the other hand, for those Jews who are genuinely interested in "rediscovering" themselves, Rabbi Baeck's program is much too vague and too abstract. In his article, he only hints at some of the finer insights he has formulated elsewhere. But one might well ask whether these insights are enough to answer the many questions that arise in the minds of young Jews concerning the problem of how to live as an American Jew. . . .

RABBI IRA EISENSTEIN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Daiches states his position very comprehensibly. And we ought not to suppose that his proclivities are quaint. Sensibly enough, Mr. Daiches desires the authentic ritual of his Scottish childhood, unspoiled by our Babbitt innovations. If you people must be religious, he avers, do it right or drop it. As a former Orthodox believer, he denominates as "right" the historic modes; they are most congenial to him.

But does he not overlook that (unfortunately, I believe) these modes are not congenial to the large majority of Jews in the United States? Most Jews have not been fathered by venerable Hebraic divines; religiously, their childhoods have been an atrocious mishmash or a blank. The only thing congenial to these spiritual orphans is conformity, and they merrily conform to what is right and proper in the American mores. Together with others, they toss their traditions into the interdenominational melting pot, and afterwards scoop out the watery uniform hash. . . .

J. J. YOSHOR

Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The burden of Mr. Daiches' article is the accusation leveled at American Jewry that it is dishonest because it does not own up to the assimilationism which it is in fact practicing.

There is a lot to be said in favor of this point of view, more, I suspect, than Mr. Daiches has said. Thus I must agree with his theoretical conclusions regarding the use of the word "temple," the often unconscious assimilationism of professing Jews, the wishy-washy eclecticism of Rotarian religion, the escapism of much secular Zionism, etc. . . .

What amazes me, however, is that Mr. Daiches considers himself qualified to say all this. . . . If the Existentialism of Rosenzweig and his followers, which receives relatively so much space in your pages, has anything important to teach it is certainly that there can be no essential truth which is not a truth of commitment, a truth which is backed up not by mere academic ideas but by the lives of those who profess it. Mr. Daiches has the *chutzpah* to state clearly that, as for himself, he is not committed to it. In terms of an Existentialist definition of truth, Mr. Daiches is simply being untruthful. . . .

Whereas we who commit our lives to Judaism also want Judaism to be alive, Mr. Daiches wants it to remain "Orthodox" (really meaning: as it used to be, the longer ago the

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better!). Therefore, his unwarranted reflections on Orthodoxy and liberalism. I am sure that it cannot have remained hidden from him that one can understand the beginning of the Pirke Avot differently from the manner which he, at least in his article, assumes to be the only way and which he would not want to change because (a) in that form he does not have to believe in it and (b) it delights his cultural-anthropological heart. Why he considers himself qualified to pontificate not only on Judaism but also on Americanism is beyond me: as a liberal Jew and as an American I believe in the doctrine of the election of Israel, and I rather resent being labeled by him Orthodox and un-American for it. . . .

RABBI STEVEN S. SCHWARZSCHILD

Fargo, North Dakota

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Upon reading Dr. Baeck's "The Task of Being an American Jew" one is startled by the apparent irrelevance of the article as a presumed reply to Mr. Daiches. Dr. Baeck seems to interpret Mr. Daiches' remarks as an attack upon reforms of religious practices in America. He ignores the issue which is Mr. Daiches' central concern—the ever increasing inconsistency of Jewish practices with the human values in the lives of Jews which, in prouder phases of Jewish history, they have served. . . .

HYMAN GROSS

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Dr. Daiches has his solution to the problem of what one's children should be taught about Jews and Judaism, a solution based on faith—faith in Western civilization. He feels that "our main duty as members of Western culture is to contribute towards that liberal humanism in which, I should imagine, the salvation of the world alone lies." Yet he thinks that Jews should teach their children Hebrew and Jewish history. Within the framework of Western culture as a whole Jews should pay special attention to the Jewish tradition, because "the Hebrew tradition, in both its Biblical and its later, specifically Jewish phase, is a . . . central part of Western culture."

This is not true. Judaism is not a part of "Western civilization." After the rise of Christianity, Jewish and Western culture developed separately. The isolated cases of Jewish influence on Western civilization before the modern period of emancipation do not by any stretch of the imagination make Judaism a "central part of Western culture.". . . The traditional civilization of the Jews is almost unintelligible to the Western mind. This is not a question of remoteness in time or space. The ordinary modern reader can derive pleasure from reading ancient Greek plays, for example. He can see that Sophocles or Socrates or Thucydides were trying to achieve something worth while. By ordinary Western standards the Jewish thinkers from Hillel to the Vilna Gaon were wasting their time (with the exception of some during the Arab and Spanish periods of Jewish history). It is hardly an exaggeration to say that from the modern point of view the Talmud seems largely pointless rubbish. . . .

The Hebrew Bible can be called a part of Western culture with somewhat more justification, since it has been much read by Westerners. But the Bible as reflected in Jewish tradition and the "Old Testament" of the Western world are not the same thing. . . .

This way of treating the Jewish past is perhaps flattering to many Jews; it may make them feel that their ancestors were very fine people because they made such great "contributions to civilization." It would be more useful if Jews learnt more about what their ancestors were like. . . .

J. HAJNAL

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Dr. Daiches' article "American Judaism: A Personal View" is apparently intended as an attack on Reform Judaism. In fact, however, it helps to demonstrate the soundness of the movement. Dr. Daiches is calling for someone to take him by the hand and lead him back to Judaism. He wants to be guided back, but does not know how to find the way. He reminds me of the story of the boy in the small town who told his understanding teacher that he wanted to invite a certain girl to the class prom, but did not know the right way to do it. The teacher replied, "Ask her, my friend; there is no wrong way" . . . .

THEODORE SISKIND

Bronx, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Professor Daiches' use of the word "assimilationist" is in keeping with present-day confusion in the use of words from which meaning has been largely drained by constant misuse. I first heard the term, and many of its descriptive synonyms, when I was a boy in New York's ghetto. In those days the *hazanim, melamedim, shohatim,* and the hundreds of self-styled rabbis who came with the waves of immigrants from the Old World were proving themselves woefully unequal to the task of guiding the struggling Jewish communities. It was in this apathetic, cynical,

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skeptical, albeit Orthodox atmosphere, that we heard rumors concerning some "rich," "uptown" Jews who did not keep kosher; who called their shuls "temples," in which they sat without hats, listening to organ music played by a boy. Later, I was greatly surprised when I discovered that it was these same "fancy" Jews who had built our settlement houses; established the English classes for the immigrants; organized the committees to defend Mendel Bailis in Russia and Leo Frank in Georgia; and fought successfully against several attempts to restrict Jewish immigration, years before Senator McCarran.

Professor Daiches says that he is "offended by the dropping by American Jews of so many things" in which he himself does not believe. He justifies this presumptuousness, "because as a boy in Scotland I found my Jewish Orthodoxy accepted by my neighbors with respect and interest precisely for the reason that it was different . . . that it was the real thing". . . .

Here in North Carolina, the citadel of American Presbyterianism, our neighbors appear to be less discriminating theologians than their brethren in Scotland. Whether we go to *shul* or to temple, they show not the slightest bias when it comes to showing their "respect and interest." The fact that one rabbi sings *Yigdal* after *ma'ariv,* while the other rabbi discusses the latest Sartre novel, does not seem to make the slightest difference to them. Neither rabbi may join the Ministerial Association, and Professor Daiches can set all his fears at rest—there is not the slightest danger of the "temple" adherents becoming "assimilated" in the near future. . . .

HARRY L. GOLDEN

Charlotte, North Carolina

"Commentary" in the Negev

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

This letter is written to you by a group of young American Jews who decided to swap the view of the IRT rumbling through Brooklyn for the quiet scenery of endless stretches of Negev sand. We are a group of chalutzim who have been in the country for a period of eight months and are now members of a kibbutz in the Negev. Although our new desert home is proving to be an interesting and challenging place to live, we must confess that we sometimes grow nostalgic for the good old cosmopolitan atmosphere of New York City—and somehow Beersheva, the Big City of the South, fails to provide an adequate substitute.

Our Hebrew is now progressing to the stage where we can slowly plow through the local newspapers and publications, which has further proved to us the lack of a literary and intellectual equivalent in Israeli culture for a monthly like COMMENTARY. Although there is much to admire in the growth of our tough and impudent Jewish nation, we sadly miss the stimulating and informative nature of COMMENTARY. As you already know, the collective nature of kibbutz living adds many compensations to life; however, the daily struggle of building the land still has priority over all other phases of kibbutz living—resulting in a healthy, pilgrim existence lacking in the means to pay for such an investment as a subscription to COMMENTARY. Therefore, we'd like to make a request for a free subscription. Even if we cannot offer financial remuneration, we'd like to extend an invitation to you to visit us in Kibbutz Nirim next time you come to Israel.

YEHUDIT KRAFF
in the name of
KVUTZAT AMERICANIT

Kibbutz Nirim
Israel

[A member of the COMMENTARY publication committee has kindly contributed a three-year subscription to the Kvutzat Americanit.—ED.]

Food for the Spirit

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I want to compliment COMMENTARY on the contrapuntal skill with which, in its December and January issues, it scores the dangers besetting the way of the Jewish intellectual today. Will Herberg's and Leslie Fiedler's articles on Franz Rosenzweig and Simone Weil show in a very instructive manner the positive and negative reactions to that shrinkage of Jewish spiritual life and substance which your journal tries to combat.

From my own philosophical contacts, I know only too well of the losses which the Jewish people have suffered—not only from the hands of murderers, but also from a worldly complacency which estranges from us and has driven into the arms of the Church so many of our finest and deepest minds—such as Bergson, Gabriel Marcel, and my friend and fellow student Edith Stein, who is now apparently on the threshold of canonization. American Jewry ought to beware of the tragic plight of many potential Simone Weils whom we may become guilty of rearing within our own midst if we do not give what they long for—a new intensity of search, vision, and spiritual existence.

FRITZ KAUFMANN

University of Buffalo
Buffalo, New York

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

The Path to Total Terror

THE ORIGINS OF TOTALITARIANISM. By HANNAH ARENDT. Harcourt, Brace. 477 pp. $6.75.

Reviewed by DAVID RIESMAN

A SCIENCE-FICTION tale of some years back tells of a young man who gets the idea that the world he lives in is arranged especially for him. If he walks into a drug store and orders an ice-cream soda, neither the drug store nor the soda existed prior to his need of them. If he meets a girl, this is because it has been arranged by the secret world-controllers who are playing with him. He charily confides some of these suspicions to a friend of his—and then we learn that his fantasies are in fact true: his "friend" reports to the hidden controllers that the hero "is getting on to us." Thereupon, the controllers contrive one night to make the hero's city disappear; when he wakes in the midst of nothingness, he realizes that his paranoia was all too realistic.

Indeed, it is to science fiction, rather than to the more humane utopias of the past, that we must look for the extremities of the totalitarian's belief that, while nothing may be in itself meaningful, everything may be possible. Hannah Arendt's extraordinarily penetrating book makes plain that totalitarianism, whether Nazi or Stalinist, cannot be understood so long as we continue to use the traditional categories of common sense: it cannot be explained by the mere desire for power, for national expansion, for class revenge—for any motives that are simply human, though evil. Totalitarians are "inhuman" in that they are motivated toward total domination of the globe, toward total destructiveness of human individuality everywhere. Their goals are based neither on specific, narrow interests nor even on the utopianism of earlier ideologies, religious or socialist, which sought to extend in the future the sway of certain already given values.

The concentration camps which are, for Dr. Arendt, the characteristic feature of totalitarianism, exist not primarily to silence the opposition (this was liquidated in the early stages) or even to cow the population through terror (for knowledge of what precisely goes on in the camps is hidden from the people), but as experiments in total domination — experiments whose very "success" is more frightening than any previous tyranny the world has had to endure. (It is this that makes Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four* such a depressing book: unlike Huxley in *Brave New World,* he could imagine nothing that was not already Stalinist or Nazi practice.)

Dr. Arendt, building on the work of such writers as Kravchenko, Rousset, and Bettelheim (she criticizes Dallin for his "utilitarian" theory that the Soviet camps are simply an inefficient forced labor supply), shows how the Soviet Union, in eliminating mere whimsical bestiality and sadism from its treatment of people, in forcing friends and families to denounce anyone among them on whom arbitrary suspicion falls, has gone further than the Nazis in the direction of total domination. On this point, I entirely agree with her: most of the Nazis were too corruptible, in their still human desires for money or revenge, to succumb (save in the one sphere of racial policy) to complete and fanatical ideals of total domination. But then, Himmler had less time at his disposal than Stalin has had to create in his own image men who are not even attached to their own lives, let alone to their ease, their advancement, or even their cruel satisfactions.

Without a certain amount of fanaticism on her own part (she reminds one of Simone Weil in her passion and eloquence, though she is not mystical and is much more closely tied to the data of historical experience), Dr. Arendt would perhaps have been less well equipped for the enormous task of understanding she has set herself: namely, to make sense of just those excesses which strike the non-totalitarian world as madness; to feel her way into the mentality of both the leaders and the followers of totalitarian movements, which requires showing just

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what it was they despised in the bourgeois 19th-century world they wanted to destroy. At times this leads her perilously close to assuming that this world, because it fell and because it bred its destroyers, did in fact "deserve" to be destroyed. Such an attitude assumes a historical rationality and inevitability which, in other aspects, Dr. Arendt rejects; yet this attitude is significant precisely because it is arguable that very little major work of the last hundred years in philosophy and social science—whether we think of Marx, of Comte, of Freud, of Nietzsche—has been produced without some degree of fanaticism. And *The Origins of Totalitarianism* must be placed on that small shelf of truly seminal works whose very errors, exaggerations, and over-systematizations so often turn out, in the unpredictable history of ideas, to be liberating and fructifying for thought.

Dr. Arendt begins by tracing the fateful way in which the Jews became the first near-total victims of near-total domination. (Had the Nazis remained longer in power, the Poles, Ukrainians, and "unhealthy" Germans would have followed suit; the Gypsies actually were wiped out.) It is her aim to show that the Jews were not accidental and wholly innocent victims, as the "scapegoat" theory would have it, and that modern exterminatory anti-Semitism has virtually no connection with medieval or czarist attitudes and outrages—let alone with mere social anti-Semitism in the Western countries. She observes that the Jews lost, with the decline of absolute monarchy, and the later maturing of the national state into the imperialist state, their economic and political function as state bankers and financial-diplomatic intermediaries (of course, this function was monopolized by a very small number, who thereby "led" their fellow Jews). At the same time, the Jews did not find a functional place in the basic industries of the developing mass societies, but remained "between parvenu and pariah"—either parasitic diamond jobbers or stock manipulators or seekers of fame and the aura of fame in the cosmopolitan glow by which their Jewishness would be erased. Drawing on Proust's work, she shows how in aristocratic and highly anti-Semitic French circles Jewishness, like homosexuality, became a "vice" the more titillating the less it was disguised. Many mobile Jews were put in the position of employing or appearing to employ precisely their social marginality as Jews for their ticket of entry to society. Under such conditions, these Jews lost not only their economic and, in the widest sense, their social function, but also their bearings; and the author shows the consequences of this in her brilliant account of the Dreyfus Affair. The French Jews, with hardly any exceptions, were unable to see that the clearing of Dreyfus involved more desperately political issues than those embodied in a business deal; unlike Bernard Lazare, Zola, and Clemenceau, they kept insisting that it must all have been a mistake, that nobody—least of all Dreyfus's military and reactionary enemies—really meant ill, either to France or to the Jews. Dr. Arendt suggests that the failure to fight the issue through, and the acceptance instead of the compromise of Dreyfus's pardon, made it plain that political anti-Semitism could be used to undermine democracy and the nation-state.

In her attitude, Dr. Arendt may be a bit too uncharitable to the weakness, the lack of heroism, of Dreyfus's family and of the other comfortably fixed French Jews; she admires courage and despises middle-class pretense, blindness, and vacillation. At the same time, she tends to

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assume not only that the selection of the Jews as political game was no accident but that the success of the game was no accident either but a tribute to the political discernment of the anti-Semites (who "really understood" the masses' longings) and to the cowardice and illusions of the Jews and their liberal friends. The danger of assuming that what happened had to happen (which is different from assuming that one can explain it retroactively) always confronts the historian who attempts to be more than a narrator of antiquities.

However that may be, Dr. Arendt brilliantly uses the French "rehearsal" to show how anti-Semitism becomes a platform uniting the "elite" and the "mob" in contempt for bourgeois society and its laws; and in seeing that this alliance lies at the heart of the totalitarian movements of the 20th century, she makes one of her most important contributions. For instance, her analysis helps account for the success of such a play as *The Madwoman of Chaillot* (written, by the way, by an anti-Semite), which allows people to laugh at the spectacle of the witty bohemians (i.e. the intellectual elite), the wisely mad, and the charming mob leading wicked, rapacious oil financiers (the bourgeois) into a deathtrap; even businessmen enjoy the spectacle of their arty and fashionable demise. The real "merchants of death" under conditions of modern malaise and discontent with middle-class society become writers who, like Céline, passionately argue for the massacre of all Jews, not insomuch as they are Jews but insomuch as they are symbols of what these writers cannot stand in their society. Indeed, Dr. Arendt shows that anti-Semitism of this modern variety has a long leftist history (Marx's hatred of "the Jew" is a case in point); such anti-Semitism is not, as so many still think, the attitude of conservatives wishing to preserve the status quo, but of men bent on its destruction.

As THINGS turned out, it was not the Jews at home but the blacks of Africa abroad who suffered in the 19th century from racist doctrine and practice. Dr. Arendt's account of what happened when the Boers in South Africa confronted tribes of "savages" who could neither be quickly killed nor quickly domesticated—but who served as a frightening image of what "going native" meant under the nomadic life of the veld—is one of the many dramatic chapters in her series of moving historical tableaux. Modern anthropology has so accustomed us to assume the fundamental ethnocentrism of such a ferocious value judgment as is implied in the term "savages" that it is startling to the reader to find that Dr. Arendt herself regards the Zulus and other African people as savages and not merely as "preliterates" with a valuable and interesting culture. Yet it is perhaps this bias, which she shares with the wonderful short novel of Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, which provides her with the empathy required to comprehend the mind of the Boer. In his deracination from all civilized values, the Boer lost not only anything that might be called a Christian attitude toward the indigenous population; he also lost whatever he had possessed of a "capitalist" mentality. Without developing a new ideology, he regressed to a bitter agrarianism, fundamentalism, and anti-urbanism; and became himself metaphorically a member of a lost tribe. Thus, he lost the skills and motives that might have led him to exploit the diamond mines of the Rand, rather than leave this to the hated Jews and to Cecil Rhodes.

The South of Africa thus contributed (by what route Dr. Arendt never makes quite clear) a theme of virulent racialism to the developing pattern of totalitarian theory and practice inside Europe. Meanwhile, in Egypt, at the other end of Africa, the British were facing a very different problem from that of the Boers: they had taken Egypt, not for its loot or to colonize it nor for purposes of future incorporation, but simply because of the need to protect the seaway to India. If the Boers got too close to the natives to be distinguished from them save by skin color, the British proconsuls in Egypt remained wholly detached from the natives whom they supervised. Lord Cromer stands, in Dr. Arendt's account, as the epitome of the cold, correct bureaucratic mentality that could equally well massacre or protect an alien people. Proceeding in the face of what he considered the sentimentality of the British public, he developed techniques for systematic and disingenuous rule. He did this selflessly, capably, anonymously, much as T. E. Lawrence and other foreign agents later served British imperial policy. Dr. Arendt seems to be asserting that such techniques of organization were precursors of totalitarian bureaucracy, as necessary as were the French mobs who stoned Dreyfusards, or the Boers who wantonly murdered Zulus, for the dynamism of the totalitarian movement.

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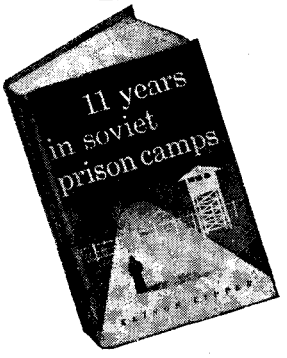

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YET THE line which runs from Cromer's imperialistic tendencies, chastened as these were by his exalted ethic and his devotion to reason, to the brutality of a Nazi governor-general in occupied territory, seems to me slim indeed, though no more tenuous than many similar chains of guilt which historians of ideas and of institutions have been drawing in our day. Dr. Arendt is torn between her partial recognition of this fact in addition to her well-justified sympathy for the heroes and poets of the British foreign service, on the one hand, and her belief that imperialism, along with anti-Semitism, laid the groundwork for totalitarianism, on the other. The second third of her book is in fact devoted to imperialism. She sees this movement as tending, for example, in the case of Cecil Rhodes, to expansion for expansion's sake; Rhodes' famous remark, "I would annex the planets if I could," has the ring of totalitarian inhumanity and fanaticism. Beyond that, she sees imperialism more or less as Hobson does—as an expression of the political power of the bourgeoisie and as the last desperate move of capitalism after people and produce and capital become surplus. In my opinion, she gives insufficient weight to Schumpeter's criticisms of Hobson. Schumpeter suggests that imperialism has its roots largely in pre-capitalist habits rather than late-capitalist crisis; imperialism is out of keeping with the "soft" moral climate and free-trade economic ethic of mature capitalism. (Schumpeter's views have recently become available in an excellent translation by Heinz Norden: see *Imperialism and Social Classes*, edited by Paul M. Sweezy.)

Dr. Arendt observes that those countries which missed out in the race for empire abroad tended to develop their prologues to totalitarian impulses in the midst of the European homeland. Thus, she describes the "Pan-movements" of Central and Eastern Europe (Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism) as a kind of internal imperialism divorced from the restraints imposed by economic interest, collecting followers (and foes) on the basis of mere tribal identities: "In psychological terms, the chief difference between even the most violent chauvinism and this tribal nationalism is that the one is extroverted, concerned with visible spiritual and material achievements of the nation, whereas the other, even in its mildest forms (for ex-

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ample, the German youth movement) is introverted, concentrates on the individual's own soul which is considered as the embodiment of general national qualities. . . . It claims its people to be unique, individual, incompatible with all others, and denies theoretically the very possibility of a common mankind long before it is used to destroy the humanity of man."

At this point, Dr. Arendt turns her attention once more to the Jews in order to show how their own tribalism, as caricatured in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, paradoxically became both a consciously and unconsciously emulated model for the many Nazi leaders who felt that if the powerless Jews could form an international conspiracy of "blood," so all the better could they. One of history's many ironies described by Dr. Arendt is that only one important Jew ever himself believed this sort of thing. Disraeli, knowing as little about the Jews as the Nazis did, imagined them in his novels and daydreams as a secret power underneath all history, a power from which he drew a good deal of the inspiration for his own play at empire-building. *The Origins of Totalitarianism* shows the decisive importance of a belief, on the part of mob and elite alike, that there is a conspiratorial, numerically small power which rules History—the Jews in the case of the Nazis, "Wall Street" today in the case of the Bolsheviks; the existence of this alleged power serves both as a model to be imitated, and as a justification for counter-secrecy, and, more important perhaps than either, as an "explanation" for the bewildering life experiences of the movement's followers.

THE MOST significant of these experiences for attitude formation is that of feeling oneself as an actual or potential "surplus" in an industrial society, as one who is vulnerable to dislocation in the class system by shifts of economic fortunes and to dislocation in the nation-state system by loss of communal roots. (In the reviewer's opinion, Dr. Arendt does not pay enough attention to the closing down of emigration routes after the First World War as a notification to the surplus ones that they no longer had a place of hope and refuge. With the hardening of national, and especially American, boundaries, the growth of "tariffs on people" becomes as explosive an international force as the growth of tariffs on commodities.) Dr. Arendt observes that, whereas the slave had a place in earlier societies because he had a function in them, the new de-classed and de-nationed of the 20th century are just what the exported ones have since come to be called: DP's, people without place. They perforce depend on their mere humanity as the source of their only claim on mankind.

But since this claim has not proved very strong (though I think Dr. Arendt is here once again too harsh against those easy whipping-boys, the "well-meaning liberals," who tried to help the stateless ones), such DP's are forced to cling to the only thing they have, to their class or tribal tags; in Europe many refuse even the possibilities of assimilation to a host culture. The DP's within and without a country are forced by circumstance to regard all respectable society as a racket, impure and simple, at the same time that their helpless presence symbolizes the puzzling breakdown of national communities and of international comity. In their contempt and cynicism, not only they themselves but also those who observe them and fear the same fate, fall all the more readily for the "keys" which reduce history to the manifestation of class or tribal identities.

Does this not show the importance, in the development of totalitarianism, of sheer confusion as to what is going on in the world? Dr. Arendt makes it very plain that confusion serves to rally people to the movements which claim to be "above parties" and which argue that parties are simply part of the façade, the swindle, of the "dying" democratic state—whose engineered death later "proves" the rightness of the earlier label. The confused ones who rally to these movements are people whose disorientation is far different from the sheer political ignorance in which pre-modern peasant societies lived; they are people who are troubled by a literate disorientation which seeks ideological answers no longer given by religion or by the sheer presence of an obvious and obviously oppressive ruling group. And confusion also serves to bewilder, on the other hand, the enemies of the totalitarian movements, who suppose that the latter have limited objectives and that, once they have conquered a place in the sun, appeasement will keep them from wanting the sun itself.

In this connection, Dr. Arendt demonstrates that, if the concentration camp is the sign of the existence of totalitarianism in power, the front organization is the means by which it gains power. The front organizations fool not only the outside world about the aims of the

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movement, by presenting that world with "normal" unfanatical sympathizers, gullible or cynical apologists, and interpreters who put down a barrage of rational explanations ("provocation" or "excesses in the lower ranks") to explain away what the movement does; but the fronts also serve just as much to fool the inner core of members about the nature of the outside world. For this world presents itself to the inner core not as it is, but through the "reasonable" sympathizer of the front organizations. Until iron curtains and mass terror can shut out the non-totalitarian reality, all but the most tenacious of the inner core need the reassuring existence of the sympathizer in order to remain convinced that their ideological key to history is actually correct and that their beliefs that the Jews or the "60 Families" rule, and that they deserve death for this, are not simply crazy and monstrous creeds.

At the same time, since the party member knows more than the sympathizer, he can look down on him as the gullible one; and Dr. Arendt describes the totalitarian hierarchy as an onion of contempt, in which each layer sees "the world" in the image of the next outside layer, and hence as more gullible and easily controlled than it actually is. At the center stands the Leader himself, who combines in his own person the role of Hard Core—endlessly manipulating the other inner layers to prevent palace cliques and the "return to normalcy" which usually follows a revolution—and the role of Chief Front, able on occasion to appear both to his own followers and to the outer world as more conciliatory and "natural" than the small fry around him. If, as I think, this picture makes sense, it is not the least frightening aspect of our present relations with the Soviet Union to see Stalin as deceived, not so much by his own ideology as by his own fronts, concerning the strength of opposition everywhere against Communism, while still feeling himself able, when things get a bit rough, to smooth them out by assuming the "Good Joe" role at the same moment he inaugurates another series of purges.

In view of the contributions of Dr. Arendt's book, it is important that its imaginative historical reconstructions be subjected to professional criticism; there are a number of points where I think Dr. Arendt, on shaky evidence, skates daringly over documentary gaps. In general, as I have already implied, she tends to make totalitarianism appear as consistently fanatical; she therefore overinterprets specific actions in terms of long-range goals, and does not allow for any more or less accidental concatenations of bureaucratic forces, slip-ups, careerisms, as explanatory factors. Thus, she sees the duplication of agencies by Nazis and Bolsheviks as a device for mystification, and as serving other totalitarian ends. She does not suggest that such duplication might appear (as it did under Franklin Roosevelt) only partly as a means to keep various people and policies in suspense but also partly because it is hard, even for a dictator, to end the life of an agency. This general slant makes her assume that totalitarianism, while thoroughly un-utilitarian in pursuit of such older human goals as wealth and power, is ferociously efficient in seeking total domination as such. She writes: "Those who rightly understand the terrible efficiency of totalitarian organization and police are likely to overestimate the material force of totalitarian countries, while those who understand the wasteful incompetence of totalitarian economics are likely to underestimate the power potential which can be created in disregard of all material factors." On the whole I agree with this; yet

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there is evidence that even the Soviet MVD can make mistakes; the kind of balefully brilliant scrutiny of the hero recounted in *Nineteen Eighty-four* may be less frequent than a flat-footed brutality and incompetence. Dr. Arendt accepts the statements of Stalin or Himmler about police organization as unequivocal testimony to their unerring organizational genius. Such historians as Trevor-Roper adduce impressive contrary evidence.

But such questions of detail and emphasis are relatively minor in comparison with the achievement of this book. It is not only an achievement in historiography, but also in political science and, as in its extraordinarily illuminating discussion of the rights of man, in philosophy and ethics. It is throughout a densely imaginative work, truly serious, which makes great demands on the reader, for intellectual readjustments as much as for historical background. I happen to think such an experience in understanding our times as this book provides is itself a social force not to be underestimated.

Ideology vs. the Novel

THE AGE OF LONGING. By ARTHUR KOESTLER. Macmillan. 362 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by ALFRED KAZIN

THE AGE OF LONGING is a highly sophisticated talkfest on "these messy times," its scene Paris in "the middle nineteen-fifties," on the eve of war with the "Commonwealth of Freedom Loving People." Its contents consist in part of exasperated farce and mostly of stately "brilliant" epigrams on the impotence of all present classes, ideas, and intellectuals before the Communist threat to the West. The characters, though several are well-known French and British intellectuals, have been so consciously contrived as "symbols," and each in his turn is so mercilessly clever and all-knowing a vocal representation of The Old Bolshevik, The Literary Ex-Communist, The Apocalyptic Madman, The Young American Abroad in Search of Something-Real-To-Believe-In, The Soviet Diplomat, etc., that the book reads like an anthology of all the desperately bright café sayings that have been and will be uttered by intellectuals more interested in possessing an ideology than in thinking.

Though I respect Koestler for his thorough independence, for important books of personal testimony like *Scum of the Earth* and *Dialogue with Death* even more than for a pioneering work like *Darkness at Noon,* and not least, for his willingness to play a consciously symbolic role that has affected liberals in the West, I have never been greatly taken with the quality of his mind or heart. He has always seemed to me one of those quick-witted ideologues whom our age has raised to prominence not because of their sensibility or depth of moral insight, but because we are grateful to them for their candor and have learned from their sufferings. Still, none of my misgivings about Koestler's lack of fineness as a writer prepared me for this brutally synthetic novel.

For what must strike anyone who cares in the least about the art of fiction is not the "pessimism"—about America particularly—that has so outraged some reviewers, though it certainly has a self-consciously destructive quality that is quite ugly. It is, rather, the fact that after four novels, Koestler can write a work of fiction, based on the very best French models in form and on Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* in theme, that is basically contemptuous of individual human beings and that in its longing for "a new age of faith" betrays a distaste for human passion and the human body that is far more startling than if it had come from Aldous Huxley.

No matter how full of sociological cant your education may have been, the whole point of writing fiction in our day, it would seem to me, is that you begin by accepting in your own characters that simple, healing love of individual existence which so much else today constantly threatens to destroy. Just as poetry reminds us of the inviolable dignity of contemplation once offered by the faithful practice of a religion; just as the drama—where it still exists—serves to concentrate for us those genuinely dialectical conflicts within society which in our pressing concern with survival we now tend to put at the back of our consciousness, so the novel today can still inspire us with some respect for the sacredness of each individual human being *moving* through time made visible in narrative.

BUT a political novelist who conceives of his characters simply as types, as Koestler does in *The Age of Longing*—who even consciously represents individuals as types because the original models weary and disgust him—is not simply *less* of a novelist than a Silone or an Orwell.

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Translated with a Preface by Harold A. Larrabee

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He is against the novel itself, for though he hates Bolshevism, he has accepted the fatal Bolshevik premise that individuals are not *interesting* in themselves. All those things which are the work of men—classes, ideas, social forms, the conscious extraction of "symbols"—are more real to him than those human beings in whom he sees only the mistakes, the cruelties, and the self-deceptions that human beings practice.

A novel like *Arrival and Departure,* lame as it was, nevertheless had a compelling interest, for Koestler was fascinated by a figure so unique in his experience as Richard Hillary, the gallant, politically "infantile" RAF pilot, who returning to combat despite his skinless face and charred body, displayed an old-fashioned love of country and romantic derring-do that were new to Koestler. But *The Age of Longing* is filled entirely with types Koestler thinks he knows past satiation and entirely detests—Communists and some ex-Communists as well; or the new "Neanderthal men" who now represent the Soviet Union abroad, and who would, of course, kill Koestler if they could; or the Americans, whom, like all good Europeans of his generation, he sees entirely as creatures of a mechanistic environment, and therefore distrusts. So no one in the book is allowed even a few dispassionate words about his physical appearance—the epigrams bombard you on every side; no one can be shown *growing*—all people are case histories. Unfortunately, Koestler is not only too clever all the time, but is so eager to impress that even the chapter titles—"Fatigue of the Synapses," "A Sentimental Education," "Decline of a Hero," and the like—give each character and each crisis away beforehand. The characters talk at each other with all the sodden brilliance of old-style Bolsheviks at a party conference:

"And you sit in the no-man's land between the fronts, suspended between heaven and earth like Mohammed's coffin," said Julien.

An *American* girl asks an ex-Communist: "What gave you the initial push—to start on your odyssey, I mean?" The descriptive writing itself is usually of a glib "scientific" knowingness, inserted anywhere and at any time: "The brandy, yellow and sticky, expanded slowly into a Rorschach blotch on the marble surface." But what shows up most is the irritation with

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every physical appearance of life. "The puddle in the centre was shaped like Nikitin's skull, with rivulets like tentacles growing slowly out of it." Well, Nikitin is the GPU man, and of course has the geniality of Malik and the kindliness of Gromyko, though it is to be doubted that we shall ever defeat the Nikitins by thinking of them as Neanderthals in business suits. Yes, even the non-Russians, in their conversations about books, politics, love, show a weariness of the flesh, a disgust with the simplest pleasures of life—in Paris!—that explains the longing for an abstract new age of faith, away from these "messy times," that is the theme of the book. It is that physical irritability with men, women, love, food, cities, that troubles me most about the book. First, because it goes against the very genius of the novel, which deals in the textures of life. Secondly, because to talk of *anyone* as "Neanderthal" reminds us that men in Moscow now call all heretics "crocodiles" and "reptiles" because it is in their tradition to deny that their opponents are men.

Flying off the Broomstick

WITCH HUNT: THE REVIVAL OF HERESY. By CAREY MCWILLIAMS. Little, Brown. 361 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by IRVING KRISTOL

WHEN Lincoln Steffens, after his trip to Russia, announced "I have seen the Future and it works," he coined an epitaph that may appropriately be inscribed on the tombstone of 20th-century liberalism. For what he gave expression to was nothing less than a systematic derangement of the senses, a daring adventure in hallucination, whereby the categories of space were converted to the categories of time, enabling a whole generation to gaze eastward toward Russia and see nothing but the Future.

History has known many such derangements, but until our time they have been generally regarded as a prerogative peculiar to religions: the Jew looking to Zion, the Catholic to Rome —they too claimed to see the Future. Liberalism, on the other hand, had from its very beginnings set a premium on sobriety, orderly sensation, and consecutive thought, had celebrated plain evidence and rational judgment, and had indeed defined itself in terms not of what men think but how they think. Where, then, did Lincoln Steffens acquire that faith which surpassed reason, attached itself to authority, and discerned the Future where there was only Communist Russia? How did liberalism transform itself from a critic of revealed doctrines to the ally of one particular doctrine, namely Marxism? How did it come about that that apotheosis of liberalism, Harold J. Laski, could write a book comparing Communism with primitive Christianity, thinking that the establishment of such a comparison in some way justified the former, whereas liberalism had always regarded the victory of Christianity over classical culture as, in important respects at least, a catastrophe? The historian of the future will find this a rich and perplexing subject, as rich and perplexing, for example, as the transformation of Aristotelianism—which denies revelation—into the dogmatic keystone of Catholic theology. And he will find Carey McWilliams' *Witch Hunt* an illuminating source book, all the more illuminating in view of the favorable reviews it has called forth from, among others, a liberal professor at the Yale Law School, the chief editorial writer of a nationally famous liberal newspaper, a distinguished British liberal journalist, and, amusingly enough, the *New Yorker*.

It is only as an exercise in dogmatics that one can comprehend this book and its purpose: to undermine the old order in favor of the new. As a political tract it is quite simply bewildering: its concepts are not the concepts of politics as that subject is usually understood; its use of fact is not in accord with the canons of the older journalism, its vocabulary is defined by novel rules of semantics. Mr. McWilliams' premises are such that, no matter how unfolded, they omit generous portions of reality; yet he is certain that he has explained everything—he is clairvoyant as only the blind can be, and as unimpressionable as a paranoiac. It is perhaps only a natural and inevitable consequence that he should consider much of the world as rather mad, and as proof point to a "prevalence of witches," that is to say, a prevailing heightened consciousness that there are Communists among us who are up to no good. It is a fundamental article of faith with him that "without a witch hunt there would be no witches," and that these are figments produced by the fevered imagination of a loyalty "inquisition" into which America has now organized itself.

Now, whether or not there actually were

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people who thought themselves witches in the early centuries of the post-medieval epoch is an interesting question and one that cannot be answered with so peremptory a negative as Mr. McWilliams thinks. More interesting, however, is the question of whether or not Communists really exist today or whether they have been invented to satisfy the calculating sadism of the "inquisitors." The logic of his position compels Mr. McWilliams to insist that they have been invented, that there are no Communists, and that those labeled as such are only "nonconformists." The "inquisition" is thus clearly revealed as an attempt by the "ruling class" to impose an ideological conformity for the benefit of "free enterprise," for which end this same "ruling class" must surreptitiously whip up a mass hysteria.

The rhetorical forms with which this argument is pursued are worth some attention, for they serve to introduce us to that mentality of the Future which has already so damagingly affected the past and present.

(1) The Bland Omission: The names of Alger Hiss, Klaus Fuchs, and Joseph Stalin do not appear in the book; probably, if pressed, Mr. McWilliams would admit their existence but would almost certainly deny their relevance.

(2) The Concealed Definition: Mr. McWilliams is unequivocally against persecuting "heresy," a term whose meaning he never fully specifies. But since there is no record of his having defended the right of free speech for Fritz Kuhn or Father Coughlin, or of his ever having protested against the persecution by Communist regimes of what *they* call heretics, it would seem that he is only against persecuting Communist heretics, and that when he uses the word "heresy" he means "Communism."

(3) The Artful Analogy: "Lattimore faced the same dilemma that Harry Bridges faced in his recent trial; he could not prove that it was true that he was not a witch." It might indeed be difficult for an ordinary man to prove that he is no witch; but why should it be so difficult for a public figure, whose opinions and utterances have been faithfully reported for years, to show that he is not a Communist or a Communist sympathizer?

(4) The Disingenuous Platitude: "Dictatorships are brought into being by social conditions and not by evil notions or dangerous thought." If among "social conditions" Mr. McWilliams means to include conspiratorial parties aiming at despotic rule, he is quite correct. But one has the distinct impression that he intends the phrase exactly to exclude such a reference.

(5) The Specious Parallel: "The issuance by President Truman of Executive Order No. 9835 on March 22, 1947, setting up a federal loyalty program, marks the beginning of an American obsession with loyalty that, in broad outline, parallels a similar Russian obsession dating from the 'all-out campaign' against the Leningrad Literary Group in August 1946." The difference between losing one's job and losing one's head does not evidently fall within this "broad outline."

(6) The Fateful Cliché: "Freedom is indivisible" is the best example. This permits Mr. McWilliams to dismiss recent gains in civil rights for minorities because they happened concurrently with a few cases of violation of the civil liberties of individuals. (In his more theoretical mood, he explains that these gains were deliberately offered by the "strategists of American reaction"—otherwise unnamed—in order better to carry out their campaign against civil liberties.)

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(7) The Neat Non Sequitur: "To admit that a Communist cannot be a loyal American is to concede a prime tenet of the capitalist ideology, which is that not only Communists and Socialists, but all those who reject the philosophy of 'free enterprise,' are 'bad security risks.'" How does such an "admission" lead to such a "concession"?

(8) The Interrogative Theory of Proof: Mr. McWilliams devotes a chapter to the animadversions of Congressman Dondero on modern art, which he feels have had a disturbing effect on the artist in America, who presumably reads the Congressional Record at breakfast. His "proof" takes the form of a question: "To what extent have artists as a result of his attack, turned away from certain modes of expression and certain themes and subjects?" This question, strangely enough, is not directed to behind the Iron Curtain, where modern art is actually prohibited.

(9) The Raised Eyebrow: Mr. McWilliams thinks it odd that "we find it far more objectionable when a totalitarian regime openly suppresses a paper than when one disappears by merger in this country."

THESE devices of rhetoric can be endlessly catalogued, and some ambitious textual critic could choose a less rewarding vocation. But what is more important are the underlying premises that support this cockeyed world. One such premise is the non-existence of American democracy: if anything bad happens—if a Congressman or Senator is dishonest and vicious, if a college president is cowardly, if a cabinet member is narrow-minded—it does not happen because people are often dishonest, vicious, and cowardly, and because where the people rule such traits will be in evidence; it must be part of an oligarchic plot whose workings are concealed from us but about which Wall Street is fully informed. A second premise is that if anything unpleasant happens in America, it can only portend something worse, and every misstep must bring us closer to perdition—before we are saved we shall all have to go to hell; there is about Mr. McWilliams' indictment an air of gratified pessimism, none of righteous indignation.

Perhaps the most important premise is that which sets up a fundamental distinction between the sacred and the profane—the East and the West. The former is beyond human judgment—it is still too early to say, it is a society with growing pains, you can't make an omelette, etc. The latter is not only eternally judged but eternally condemned: the existence of dissent and dissatisfaction, no matter by whom or for what purpose, is in itself a verdict against the status quo, and every accusation is a presumption of guilt. Such a premise is essential to the strategy of Communism, which, in seeking "proselytes of righteousness" among Western intellectuals, aims to provide a set of axioms on the basis of which an unreal political situation is fabricated whose prime characteristic is that Communism ceases to be an issue. So long as Western intellectuals discourse on truth, freedom, and equality, and so long as this discourse evades the issue of Communism and Soviet power, the Communists have already gained an advantage. Since no society can be shown to live entirely up to its ideals, the greater the blind and mechanical stress on these abstract ideals, the smaller the possibility of what the Communists wish to avoid at all costs: any mere comparison of political realities—the reality of the life of an American worker, farmer, or intellectual with their Soviet counterparts, for instance.

To the cultivation of a state of mind that disregards such realities, that sees the world only through the bifocal lens of the Future, books such as Mr. McWilliams' make a significant contribution.

Nostalgia Is Not Enough

JOURNEY TO THE DAWN. By CHARLES ANGOFF. The Beechhurst Press. 421 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by HOWARD O. SACKLER

JOURNEY TO THE DAWN is a painful case of memory sent forth to wander through a novel with only warmth, sympathy, and nostalgic prejudice to direct it. In a rocking-chair way, of course, such a book of remembrances can be very pleasant, but the writing here is quite awkward and Mr. Angoff has extended his good-natured attitude so uncritically that the critical reader must either extend a reciprocal amount of good will or submit to his own impatience.

The migration of the Polonskys from a Russian ghetto to a Boston slum in the early 1900's, their disillusionments, their happy surprises, their slow Americanization, half eager and half begrudged—this all presents a familiar story.

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In fact, the utter familiarity of the subject together with its historical (as well as personal) importance lends it a certain mythic quality, so that attention centers on the interpretation rather than on the events themselves. And here the reader finds himself very much like the immigrant—pleased with the anecdotes and "folklore," but essentially disappointed with the absence of a true center, a meaning. Employment of a myth places more obligations on a writer than the creation of one; but not only does Mr. Angoff neglect to probe beneath his reportage, he imparts to it an unreal, tender glow from above and thereby conceals even the factual value of the material.

ALL the characters are peculiarly childlike. Everyone (except those Russian hooligans in the old country) is gentle, good, and respectful. No one is greedy or opportunistic. With two possible exceptions, no one ever gets angry enough to offer more than a mild reproach. One exception is a husband-and-wife quarrel over whether they should go to the movies (eventually they do). The other is the apoplectic rage of a romantically frustrated Hebrew-school teacher who catches two young miscreants at tic-tac-toe. His is the most credible reaction in the novel, I am afraid.

Whenever one of the immigrants begins to ache audibly or to question the cause, he is immediately comforted by a comrade with a lachrymose parody of that special Jewish stoicism (which is lachrymose enough in reality): ". . . the chosen people, chosen to suffer. . . . etc." And this lamentation rings very hollow among these child-people and their child-problems. The most played-up problem in the book is that of whether to work on Saturday, with the conflict over wearing a beard a close second. If this is supposed to represent the "encroachment" of the American Machine it is decidedly the representation of a miniaturist, a satirist, or perhaps a short-story writer.

Any genuine problems of the individual (or the individual as a Jew) are solved on the spot by some modestly quoted wisdom from rabbinical literature, in a manner which recalls the late Lloyd Douglas. No one walks away puzzled. These resolutions generally take place over a glass of hot tea, and the usual giver of advice is the ninety-year-old matriarch Alte Bobbe who salts her Talmudic gleanings with a lot of captivating mother-wit. Some of her dissertations, notably the one on love, and her rousing curses for the Czar, emerge as the best passages in the novel, but she herself is far too oracular to be human.

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Zionism and socialism keep popping up in conversations. The author allows some wholesome, though brief and undefined, approval of the Jewish state, but he religiously avoids even the most flirtatious examination of The Other Thing. Indeed, the mention of it usually evokes from those present the sort of timid, transient curiosity one expects from aborigines. Other secular ideas, and their professors, are quickly elbowed out of the spotlight, with some jest, vaudeville-style. For instance, when someone asks where Ezra, a thinking young man, is, his mother answers:

"He, oh, he's probably confusing somebody's head. Philosophy is a *meshugaas* and he's a *meshugener*. How it comes that I should have a son like that is beyond me. I must have sinned. . . . Without his philosophy he would be such a good boy!"

THE autobiographical hero is actually a child. Luckily for him (and possibly for understandable reasons of self-protection) the author has

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not modeled him to scale. Young David arrives at a position of importance a little late, but his first responses to American institutions are frequently interesting, if somewhat faun-like. I could not help noticing the utopian absence of "differences" between the little Jewish boys and the little Other Minority Boys; one bloody nose would have been reassuring. This omission seems to betray an inconsistent attitude in the light of a passage where a non-Jewish interne, having attended a circumcision party and accepted a bottle of wine from the grateful father, reports to his colleagues at the hospital—he is the only Christian in the novel who gets to say anything, by the way—"These Jews sure give you a hell of a good meal. You gotta hand it to them. They know how to cook."

It would be unfair to anyone who has ever been poor not to mention that at one point the author's cheerfulness verges on bad taste; he sees an economic depression in the slums as a kind of fiesta: "The women began to talk to one another more intimately in the stores, and lent one another eggs. . . . People now got to know each other. . . . The husbands began to visit one another, and the wives followed suit. . . . Leah . . . learned that second-hand clothes for both men and women could be bought at the Salvation Army stores for but a few cents . . . a perfectly nice new dress for a dollar. . . . Soon whole groups joined in going to the park and having picnics on the grass . . . just passing the time of day or night . . . the younger folks got to know each other. . . ."

That's *not* the way things were—and this is what one feels compelled to say of the book as a whole.

A Yiddish Thesaurus

DER OYTSER FUN DER YIDISHER SHPRACH (Thesaurus of the Yiddish Language). By NAHUM STUTCHKOFF. Edited by MAX WEINREICH. New York, Yiddish Scientific Institute—Yivo. 933 pp. $10.00.

Reviewed by S. NIGER

NAHUM STUTCHKOFF, who collected, classified, and divided into more than six hundred conceptual categories about one hundred and fifty thousand Yiddish words, phrases, idioms, and proverbs (under the editorship of Dr. Max Weinreich, research director of the Yiddish Scientific Institute—Yivo), is not a professional linguist. His vocation is in radio and the theater. Nevertheless, he has, for the past fifteen years, devoted himself in his leisure to the collection and systematization of Yiddish words. Was this a kind of hobby with which he amused himself, relaxing from playing for others? Did the company of quiet and meaningful Yiddish words divert him from the tumult of Broadway?

Sholom Aleichem, in his autobiography *Funem Yarid,* relates that when his stepmother's resounding and highly voluble curses, rhymed and unrhymed, became too much for him, a six- or seven-year-old, he would withdraw to a corner, writing down the imprecations in alphabetical order. This was Sholom Aleichem's first literary effort. But even more, it was a refuge for him from humdrum reality. In Stutchkoff's case, his "playing" with words was more than an escape or a hobby. It was an expression of profound love for *mame loshen,* for Yiddish, his mother tongue. Stutchkoff wanted to demonstrate the richness of Yiddish, to furnish the key to the treasury of the folk language not merely for pleasure in the play of its wonderful colors and nuances but for its utilization.

The goals that Stutchkoff set himself have been the same for all compilers of thesauri: (1) the collection of the entire language inventory, used in various lands or localities and in different eras, supplemented by the cumulative vocabulary of the literature, press, and theater; (2) the classification of the spoken and written language by categories of ideas; (3) the admission or rejection of words, provincialisms, archaisms, vulgarisms, colloquialisms, or neologisms.

As FOR the first goal, Stutchkoff writes in his preface that he "does not even remotely consider that this book . . . exhausts the treasury of Yiddish; certainly there are still thousands of words, expressions, idioms, sayings, and proverbs which are still to be collected and tabulated. The thesaurus is only a beginning and must be constantly enlarged and supplemented." The compiler is too modest when he declares that his tremendous collection of linguistic and folkloristic material is merely a beginning, but it is true there is and will be material to add from both the old and new Yiddish word-treasury. Nor can the second goal, that of classification by concepts, be definitively achieved by one or even two persons. Accurate determination of the

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idea group or groups to which a given word belongs is not simple, especially because of the correlations among different categories. A simple word like *parshoin,* for example, is tabulated five ways: in the subdivision "mankind," meaning a person; in "literature, press," a personage, a character in a novel or drama; in "journey," a passenger; in "beauty," a comely person; in "injustice," a rogue. This example is sufficient demonstration that idea categorization is not a mechanical task, but requires awareness of the finest nuances of words. This emerges even more clearly in considering more complicated adjectives or adverbs like *eingehaltn* with seven meanings or *gleich* with thirteen.

The most difficult and responsible of the three goals is the third, the admission or rejection of words, the determination of which archaisms, localisms, neologisms, dialectal words, or foreign borrowings may be incorporated into standard speech, which may be naturalized or legitimized, and which must be deported from the speech-kingdom as illegal or undesirable elements. In these questions, the skills of the professional linguist cannot, as Dr. Weinreich remarks in his introduction, substitute for criteria of euphony, speech rhythm, and taste. For this reason, this undertaking in the thesaurus is most subject to differences of opinion. A good many words rejected by Nahum Stutchkoff or Dr. Weinreich would have been treated more gently by others, while other neologisms accorded an eminent position in the thesaurus would have been rejected by another compiler or another editor.

BUT THIS subjective or linguistically disputable element is of minor significance in view of the highly competent and invaluable work that this Yiddish thesaurus is. The work is indeed of monumental stature to those whose medium of thought and imagination is Yiddish and also to those who study Yiddish as both the expression of the life of Ashkenazic Jewry for many centuries in many lands, including America, and the key to understanding the phenomena of this life of a people.

Those who claim the vernacular and literature of Elijah Levita (Eliohu Bokher), the Besht, Reb Nachman Bratslaver, Sholom Aleichem, Peretz, Bialik, Yehoash, Liessin, Chaim Zhitlowsky, and a galaxy of contemporary Yiddish writers, will find the thesaurus of practical and not merely theoretical significance. It will help them learn words and verbal expressions beyond their own speech experiences: words of earlier times or other regions, words created during the last decades in educational institutions where general subjects were taught in Yiddish, the lingo of musicians or the argot of thieves, old and new forms of expression tabulated in the thesaurus. A novelist seeking background for a specific locale, period, or social milieu will find the necessary speech material in the thesaurus. A writer or translator dealing with scientific subjects will find the terms for mathematics and psychoanalysis as well as for music and art.

The Yiddish thesaurus provides an even more fundamental value: it unfolds the whole speech area of contemporary Yiddish usage, demarcating its borders. The earlier period of Yiddish literature, especially that pervaded by religious content, had established a Yiddish usage and tradition which, though too confining, was whole and harmonic. The Haskalah ripped up and destroyed the framework of the old style, condemning it as too backward, too rigid. But the Haskalah could not provide the pattern for the new form of writing. This task modern Yiddish literature was able to do, beginning with Mendele Mocher Seforim, Sholom Aleichem,

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and Peretz. Modern Yiddish literature ceased to exhort or to enlighten and, instead, embraced artistic expression and, later, scientific study. From this new, incomparably richer, more differentiated, exact, and subtle Yiddish style, Nahum Stutchkoff's thesaurus drew the whole, or almost the whole, of its raw material.

The Yiddish thesaurus is a treasure not only for those whose medium of expression is *mame loshen,* but also for those to whom Yiddish is merely an object of curiosity or study. They will find in the thesaurus material for research in comparative linguistics and folklore and for study of Yiddish linguistic, folkloristic, and literary expression. The thesaurus can teach much about the mutual influences of Yiddish and Hebrew and of Yiddish and the prevailing language in a given country. An analysis of the number and quality of the words and verbal phrases for a specific concept may teach much about the history, geography, economics, and mentality of Ashkenazic Jewry. Thus, the compiler of the thesaurus, its editor, and Yivo as publisher have provided more than an authoritative and highly useful work in and about Yiddish. They have also furnished remarkable material for the most varied studies and evaluations of the whole of Jewish life.

Book Reviewers in this Issue

David Riesman is professor of social science at the College of the University of Chicago; his book *The Lonely Crowd* was recently published.

Alfred Kazin is the author of *On Native Grounds.* His new book, an autobiographical volume entitled *A Walker in the City,* will be published next fall by Harcourt, Brace.

Irving Kristol is an assistant editor of Commentary.

S. Niger is a noted Yiddish writer and literary critic. His review was translated from the Yiddish by Lucy S. Davidowicz.

Howard O. Sackler has contributed poetry to Commentary and other periodicals.

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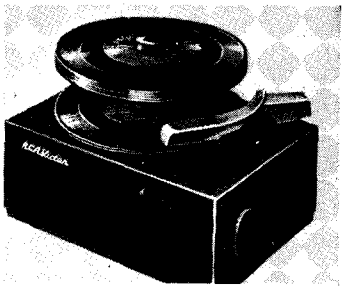

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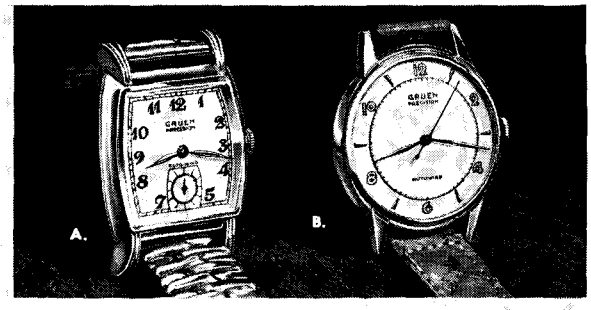

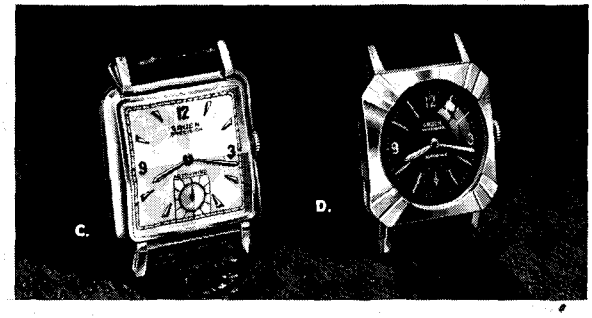

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